EXPLORING GENDERED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JUNIOR FEMALE TEACHERS AND SENIOR MALE MANAGEMENT AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

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I

1. Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree of Master of Education (MEd) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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Sharin Chantal Vermaak

22 November 2017

2. Ethical clearance certificate

3. Ethical statement

"The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research.*"

4. Dedication

I dedicate this research to female teachers at secondary school level in the hopes of enabling empowerment and progression for female teachers.

5. Acknowledgements

On reaching this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

1. My heavenly father, who provided me with strength, guidance and the ability to persevere in achieving this lifelong goal.
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3. Editor, A. Barnby for her contributions.
4. Last but not least, my loving husband for his support, motivation and never failing belief in my abilities.

6. Abstract

This research explored the sociological relationships between management and teachers at a secondary school. These gender relations were studied in regard to a) opportunities for promotion and the positions held by females as compared with males, b) the division of labour within the school, for instance the way extramural duties are allocated, and c) the decision-making processes displayed at staff meetings and at department level. Who makes what decisions and how? These topics have up to now been neglected in the relevant literature.

In this work I seek to explain the persistent patterns of gender inequality at a secondary school within the demarcated areas of exploration outlined above. In the school context, power can be applied as a strategy to control individual actions and responsibilities and to direct behaviours. Power is produced and reproduced through social interaction within the given environment by the "subjects" themselves (Lemke 2007; Connell 2010; Foucault 1954–1984:341).

A qualitative case study design was used with the aim of addressing and contributing to our understanding of persistent patterns of gender inequality. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with junior teachers and senior management, who were purposively selected for the sample. Data were analysed and interpreted using a constructivist and an interpretivist paradigm to understand the perceptions and experiences of the research participants.

The study found that it is mainly males who are promoted to management positions, an advantage wrought by the fact that there are few males in education. Consequently, females describe the education system as failing them in regard to promotion. When females are promoted to management, they are perceived by both male and female subordinates as being authoritarian and controlling. This arises from their being challenged in practice for fear of not matching up to men. Male management is perceived as having natural authority in accordance with social and cultural practices. Participants were uncertain about the way extramural activities were assigned; whatever the case, the outcome was a gendered division of labour.

Key words: gender, relationships, management, power

7. Language editor

8. List of abbreviations

1	**DBE**	Department of Basic Education
2	**MDG**	Millennium development goals
3	**OECD**	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
4	**UN**	United Nations
5	**UNESCO**	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
6	**UNFPA**	The United Nation Population fund
7	**UNICEF**	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
8	**UNSD**	United Nations Statistics Division.
9	**UNWOMEN**	United Nations Women
10	**WHO**	World health Organisation

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Annexure A: Interview schedule for management members

Interview schedule for school management team members.

Time and date _____ **Duration:** _____

Place _____

Participants number _____

Interviewer: _____

General questions:

1. How long have you worked at the school?
2. How long have you been in a management position?
3. What are your responsibilities as a part of the management team?
4. How many male and female teachers are there at the school?

Section A: Promotions

5. How are males and females promoted at the school? Please explain.
6. Into what positions are males and females promoted? Please explain.
7. How are male and female teachers promoted into management? Elaborate.
8. Does gender play a role in the promotion processes? Please explain.
9. Into what specific positions are males and females promoted?

Section B: Decision making

10. Please explain the decision making processes at the a) department level, b) staff level and c) school level? Please explain
11. Is there a difference in how staff members respond to male and female teachers in management?
12. Does gender play a role in decision making? If so how? Please explain.

Section C: Labour division

13. Do male and female teachers in management have equal responsibilities? Please explain.
14. Is there a difference in the allocation of workloads and responsibilities between male and female teachers?
15. Do you believe gender plays a role in the allocation of work responsibilities?
16. How are work responsibilities and extra-murals divided and allocated at the school? Is this equitable? Please explain.

Section D: Relationships

17. Do males in management have authority over female teachers? Please explain.

18. Describe the relationship between male management and female management?

19. Describe the relationship between male and female management in relation to junior teachers?

20. Are males and females treated equally at the school? Please explain

21. How does the school enact gender equality and equity policies? Please explain.

22. Have there been any difficulties implementing these policies? Please explain.

Annexure B: Interview schedule for teachers

Interview schedule

Time and date _____ **Duration:** _____

Place _____

Participants number _____

Interviewer: _____

Questions:

Section A: Decision making

1. How are decisions made at the school? Please explain. Give examples.
2. Who makes what decisions at what levels? Give examples.
3. Do men and women have equal authority in decision making? Please give examples.
4. Does seniority play a role in decision making during staff meetings?
5. Does gender play a role? How?

Section B: Positions and promotions

6. How are personnel promoted at this school? Please explain.
7.   Are these processes fair? Please explain.
8. How are promotion processes implemented at the school? Please explain.
9. Have you been promoted at this school? How? If not why not?
10. Are males and females promoted fairly at this school?
11. What positions are assigned to men and women at this school? Please explain. Give examples.
12. Does gender play a role in promotions? Please explain.

Section C: Division of labour

13. For which extra-murals are you responsible? Please explain.
14. Who assigns responsibilities and your workload? Please explain.
15. At what level of management is this decided? Please explain.
16. What process is used to assign workloads and responsibilities? Please explain.
17. Is this process fair or gender-based? Please explain. Give examples.
18. Are male and female teachers given specific responsibilities and workloads? Give examples.
19. Does gender determine the activities and responsibilities you are assigned?

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Chapter 1

9.1 Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014)

"Culture does not make people. People make culture. If it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must make it our culture."

Inspired by the ideal of Adichie (2014), gender has become a set of events and practices which is embedded in society, and culture. We enact gender on a daily basis whether during our conversations or in daily activities in the work environment. Only when needs be do we affirm our genders such as when challenged or perhaps when we are treated differently from what is dictated by society or our cultural beliefs. How then did we become gendered individuals? The creation of societal and cultural boundaries not only affirms the behaviours and actions of men and women but also habituates these traditions from generation to generation.

Education contributes to the development of gender identities as well as becoming a gendered context in which teachers, management and support staff affirm and uphold the gendered traditions that are cultivated in practices at school level. The relationships between teachers and those in managerial positions confirm and uphold gendered social expectations; not only do we encourage a belief in the gendered roles males and females should enact but we also directly demonstrate these roles by confirming male and female positions. Gender is therefore taught in the school and confirms certain cultural and religious practices of gender inequality.

Nevertheless, the social and cultural traditions that are actualised in education, are further encouraged and supported by gender parity and gender blindness in schools. Currently, the issue addressed by this study is situated in the alignment of the Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014) and gender parity at secondary school level. I have chosen this context, as an increasing pattern of gender inequality is currently being witnessed at this level.

This gender inequality is especially pronounced in the relations between management and teachers. Ironically, equality and equity have been reduced to a mere numerical standard of expectations which encourages a gender-blind approach in education.

I decided on the use of a qualitative case study design to gather data for this study, using semi-structured interviews to explore the phenomenon of gender and power relationships at secondary school level. The intention of the study was to obtain and understanding of how gender inequality is seated in the practices of management and within the relationships between genders.

9.2 Rationale

In 1995, at a UNESCO general conference, women in Africa were identified as a priority group along with young learners (UNESCO 2000:12). UNESCO (2000:12) drafted the Millennium Development Goals in an attempt to uplift women and young learners. The strategy for the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) consisted of three specific actions: 1) mainstreaming gender perspectives in policy planning, programmes and evaluation; 2) promoting female participation in all levels of management, governance and leadership, giving specific attention to their goals and development; and 3) developing specific programmes and activities to achieve and promote equality and equity.

Gender inequality has been a recurring and persistent pattern in educational quantitative data (Stats SA 2015; SAQMEC 2011 especially at secondary school level. The unequal status of men and women in education is especially pronounced between female teachers in junior positions and senior male management (Morley 2014; Dhlamini cited in Motshekga 2015). Females dominate the education sector at 63%; however, males make up 74% of the management and leadership structures in the education system (Stat SA 2015; Morley 2014).

Policies such as the Gender Equality and Empowerment Policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014) and the Gender Equality and Equity Bill (B50 of 1996) have been implemented to ensure increased progress and appointment of women to leadership and management structures, and equal statuses for men and women. Baily and Holmarsdottir (2015) argue that the statistical analysis and evidence offered in most documentation are based on the interpretation of gender parity and not gender equality.

Baily and Holmarsdottir (2015:832) further maintain that gender equality simply refers to the equal treatment of men and women. Gender equity, on the other hand, is the fair distribution of responsibilities, power and resources between genders (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Morley 2014). Gender equity assumes, by definition, that both genders are currently on an equal status within a school.

Gender parity is a quantitative method for counting the numbers of males and females in various positions, thus excluding the sociological relations between genders, which disadvantages women in the educational context (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Morley 2014). Accordingly, I explored the unequal nature of gendered relations between senior management and female teachers.

Simmonds (2014, cited in Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015:830; Francis & Paechter 2015) argues that counting the number of male and female teachers for the purpose of equal representation in the educational context fails to address issues of structural oppression and unequal power relations between male and female teachers, and the opportunity for gender equality.

The main focus of my study is gender inequality, which is seen as the cause of problems in the attainment of gender parity. Chilisa and Ntseane (2010) argue that gender parity is the main focus of organisations, both globally and nationally, thus producing increased gender inequality, as policies are wrongly conceptualised. Policies measure the success of policy interventions by focusing on gender parity, but do not attempt to address the unequal nature of gender relations such as that between junior female teachers and dominant management.

UNICEF (2016) refers to statistics on gender equality, producing numbers that are meant to indicate growth, development and enrolment rates in developed and undeveloped countries and to illustrate the success of equality policies (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015). In the South African context, the gender parity statistics claim that gender equality has been achieved, although this assumption is only based on the current enrolment rates of girls and boys at secondary school level (SACMEQ 2011). If the success of gender equality in South Africa is based on the enrolment rates at secondary school level, how can we possibly assume the same applies to the representation of female teachers within the education system? How can this information assist in addressing the position of females in education or enabling the progression of females to leadership and management structures?

The focus of research conducted by the United Nations (UN) and in South Africa has clearly avoided the influential factors of power relations, the sociology between genders and the quality of the working environment of most female teachers (Blackmore 2014; Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015).

I explored the current gap in the literature at the secondary school level and addressed the gendered relationship between management and junior female teachers. I also addressed the sociological power relations between genders to explain the persistent pattern of gender inequality, which has not been explored owing to conceptual differences between the terms *gender equality*, *parity* and *equity*.

I explored the decision-making processes at school and at departmental level to understand how power structures influence the position and authority of junior female teachers through policy implementation, as well as how the position and career progress of females are influenced by power and gender relations, which have not been accounted for in quantitative research on gender parity.

In this regard, the focus was on how the division of labour – for example extramural activities and responsibilities – is decided in the secondary school and whether the process itself is gendered.

I explored these fields and divisions in education through the use of a qualitative case study and semi-structured interviews to understand the current perceptions, processes and practices. I used an interpretivist and constructivist approach to interpret the perceptions of male and female teachers. For my sample, I selected both male and female teachers in management and leadership positions and junior positions using random sampling method.

9.3 Problem statement

In South Africa, gender inequality has become a persistent pattern in educational quantitative data (SAQMEC 2014; Dhlamini, cited in Motshekga 2015). The element of power in the sociological relations between genders, as well as the management and leadership structures of the education system, encourages this phenomenon and it furthermore remains unexplored.

9.4 Research questions

My study examined the social relations between members of senior management and their junior female colleagues. It investigated these social relations in terms of the processes involved in the allocation of work, teaching duties and extramural activities and responsibilities, career development and school governance. The following research questions were formulated for the study:

9.4.1 Main research question

How is power manifested in the social relations between senior male teachers and junior female teachers at a secondary school?

9.4.2 Sub-questions

- How is gender manifested in the division of labour?
- How is gender manifested in professional development through the promotion of male and female teachers?
- How is gender manifested in the decision-making processes?

9.5 Literature overview

Both current and older literature has a tendency to address three recurring issues in educational environments: gender inequality, gender equality and gender parity. Although it has been acknowledged that all three concepts achieve, facilitate and instate different processes and results (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015).

There is confusion over the practical differences seated within each concept, which render them not only conceptually confusing, but also give preference to gender parity, which nullifies attempts made to achieve true gender equality.

In addition to the conceptual confusion caused by uninformed organisational and educational environments, the idea of gender parity has become an umbrella concept, because gender equality and equity have been situated as inferior to the achievement of equal numerical values. Therefore, if equal numerical values are achieved the same results should by default mean everyone is equal and treated according to equity guidelines.

Similarly, policy demarcates and allocates authority and power to positions, allowing for the manipulation of a working environment through the application of "leaderist" and managerial functions and activities. Management is directly positioned to coordinate and control the working environment, hence have the preference to address gender issues in educational environments or avoid them. In light of the fact that managerial positions themselves orchestrate educational reform, the ability to manage and direct relationships between genders is seated in the function of cohesion and control allocated within their position and authority.

Thus, management and leadership have been encouraged to resolve male and female gender relationship issues numerically through equal representation; thus eliminating equality and equity initiatives by focusing on and addressing numbers instead of relationships, practices and the unequal statuses of men and women.

It is therefore my contention that the process in which gender inequality has become functional in educational environments, or more specifically secondary schools, has remained unexplored. The potential of male and female individuals to navigate unequal gender statuses and expectations at school level has been overshadowed by the focus on gender parity.

I conclude that not only has gender parity eluded attempts made to resolve gender issues at school level, but has also initiated a gender-blind approach. This approach has subsequently resulted in the mobilisation of unequal power relationships between management and lower ranking teachers, as well as acting as a support framework for fictitious gender equality in terms of which teachers support and maintain unequal practices as habituated tradition.

9.6 Concept clarification

Conceptually, there is a great difference between gender equality, equity and parity (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015), although most organisations and policy makers, as well as research that has been conducted on the topic, have a tendency to use these concepts interchangeably.

Accordingly, each results in different outcomes and concerns different approaches for the purpose of implementation. In the following sections I therefore clarify each within the boundaries of my study:

9.6.1 Gender

According to the UNWOMEN (2015), gender refers to the

> "… social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities" (UNWOMEN 2015).

9.6.2 Gender equality

According to UNWOMEN (2015), "… gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men". Gender equality can be defined within a wide range of circumstances and situations but largely entails the following key ideals: equal access and opportunities for employment. Challenging oppressional statuses and factors such as race, class social stereotypes, power, poverty which all tend to disadvantage a gender group or individual (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015:830).

9.6.3 Gender inequality

According to the *Encyclopaedia of business ethics and society* (Kolb 2015), gender inequality can be defined as "allowing people different opportunities due to perceived differences based solely on gender". Therefore, gender inequality refers to the unequal application of resources, power and decision-making which influences individuals' performance, positions and abilities in society as well as in employment sectors due to their gender. If preference is given to one gender group it allows for the oppression and subjugation of another gender.

9.6.4 Gender parity

Gender parity is a quantitative method for counting the numbers of males and females in various positions (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Morley 2014). Gender parity concerns equality in terms of numbers and proportions of women and men. In the context of gender equality, gender parity refers to the equal contribution of women and men to every dimension of life, whether private or public (United Nations Statistics Division – UNSD 2017).

9.6.5 Gender equity

Equity' refers to the fair distribution between the genders in terms of responsibilities, resources and power. This recognises that genders have different needs, responsibilities and decision-making powers. Moreover, these differences need to be identified and addressed. It can result in the disadvantaging of a gender group as well as result in the neglect and violation of human rights (Pan American Health Organization 2005 & 2017).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO 2015), "more than formal equality of opportunity, gender equity refers to the different needs, preferences and interests of women and men. Gender equity is often used interchangeably with gender equality, but the two refer to different, complementary strategies that are needed to reduce gender-based inequities" (WHO 2015).

9.6.6 Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming, according to Powell (2005; see also ECOSOC 1997:2; Karlsson 2010), involves a transformational process whereby women are not just progressed or added into positions but changes are initiated in values, policies and institutes which thereby develop goals and aims to enhance and develop gender equality.

9.6.7 Gender blind

According to the WHO (2015), gender blindness refers "to persons who ignore gender norms, roles and relations and very often reinforces gender-based discrimination. By ignoring differences in opportunities and resource allocation for women and men, such policies are often assumed to be 'fair' as they claim to treat everyone the same" (WHO 2015).

9.7 Outline of the study

Chapter 2:

Chapter 2 will contextualise the research problem and research questions within the literature. Chapter 2 focuses on a review of current and past literature on gender in education. I review the literature from various periods to enhance my ability to understand and encapsulate current tendencies in education.

Chapter 3:

Chapter 3 will outline the epistemological and ontological approaches to the study. Chapter 3 will explain the methods used to collect and analyse the empirical data.

It will also explain the conceptual framework used in the study and address issues related to trustworthiness. The relevant ethical considerations will also be discussed.

Chapters 4 to 6:

In chapters 4 to 6, I present the data analysis and my findings. I have divided the data analysis into three chapters for the purpose of illustrating the major themes uncovered by my research. Accordingly, I present my findings under three themes: chapter 4 addresses the theme of promotions and positions, chapter 5 addresses decision-making and chapter 6 addresses the division of labour in the education sector. Thus, the conceptual and practical implications of parity versus equality and equity at school level are illustrated.

Chapter 7

In chapter 7 I address the findings of my research study and present the conclusion to the thesis. I also draw on the data analysis to make recommendations for further academic research.

Chapter 2

Literature review

10. Introduction

According to Fink (2005 n.p.),

> … a literature review is an evaluated report of information found in the literature related to your selected area of study. The review should describe, summarise, evaluate and clarify this literature. It should give a theoretical base for the research and help you (the author) determine the nature of your research.

This chapter will therefore serve as guideline to establish the credibility of my research in the academic field of study, as well as to illustrate the existing need for research in the field of gender and power relationships between teachers and management at a secondary school. It will also examine the various perspectives on gender in the context of modern society.

The literature review will consist of four sections: gender parity, management, power, and gender politics. I have identified these as major themes which are currently being neglected owing to gender approaches that have remained quantitative.

Particularly in South African secondary schools. Quantitative data has been used to determine the progress of female teachers as well as to establish the level of current gender equality. Indeed, much of the literature on gender inequality focuses on quantitative data.

In terms of gender parity, issues of policy and practice at school level will be addressed to illustrate current enactment issues resulting from the shift in focus from equality towards gender parity. Statistical evidence will be discussed to illustrate the differential treatment, positions and promotional activities in the education system, with specific reference to males and females regarding positions and numerical representation. These statistical differentials aid in the conceptualisation of the current inequitable gender practices that pertain in the South African education system. Currently, gender inequality is largely analysed by taking a quantitative approach and using statistical analysis to determine the progression of females as opposed to males within different education sectors (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Stat SA 2014).

I will accordingly illustrate the conceptual and theoretical policy and legislative requirements and the way educational practices related to decision-making, labour division and professional development have remained largely unchanged. This is due to gender parity and statistical analysis that overshadow gender equality and equity through policy design and the irregular enactment of aims and outcomes.

Moreover, managerial positions are directly responsible for the interpretation and implementation of policy aims and outcomes. In this way, members of management are held directly accountable for the management, coordination and control of individuals in the working environment in accordance with policy (Blackmore 2014). Furthermore, management has the ability to navigate and coordinate gender relationships to achieve cohesion in the educational environment. Management directly dictates the implementation and focus of policy in educational environments, steering educational environments towards the achievement of gender parity. Thus, management has the ability to navigate positions, workloads and decision-making according to policy outlines.

The current tendency to evaluate gender inequality in terms of quantitative statistics has resulted in the avoidance and neglect of the sociological relationship between genders. This accounts for the construction and reproduction of the power relations between genders, and remains crucial for the purpose of understanding gender inequality and the tendency to recreate and maintain the power imbalances (Blackmore 2014; Akram, Emerson & Marsh 2015).

These relations are based on management structures and leadership activities that will influence, the position and promotion of females, labour division, and decision-making at school and departmental level (Johal 2014).

Gender politics can be conceptualised as the relations between males and females. Females can avoid, accept or resist the gendered practices and processes of their male counterparts within the social domain of an educational organisation (Acker 1999; Pudrovska & Karraker 2014). Therefore, I intend to understand and explore how sociological power relationships are manifested in relationships between management and junior female teachers using a qualitative approach.

10.1 Gender parity

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to discuss the methods stated in the literature as used to measure equality in education. The question that arises here is: How do we measure equality? For all intents and purposes can equality be measured? Equality, as defined in chapter 1, is situated in the relations between males and females (WHO 2015). Accordingly, the question should rather be: How do we approach and analyse these relationships to determine equality?

In both education and economic sectors, gender parity is used as a method and standard for determining gender equality (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015), as well as for establishing numerical values as equality goals and baselines for progress (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015). Furthermore, gender parity represents the numerical ratios between men and women in different positions (WHO 2015). Consequently, in educational environments parity is specifically measured in terms of the positions of males and females in management. Therefore, if equal numerical representation of males and females in management is achieved, then somehow education is declared equal (O'Manique & Fourie 2016; Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015).

Attempts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women have been ongoing since 1994, with the aim to progress and empower women into a 50% workforce division at management level in line with the Commission on Gender Equality Act (39 of 1996), as well as the Gender Equality and Equity Empowerment Policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014; Dhlamini 2015 cited in Motshekga 2015). However, parity results are conflicting, for example only 35% of schools in South Africa are led by a female principal, whereas 65% are led by males (SACMEQ 2011).

Similarly, The Gender Statistics in Africa (GAP 2011:37) shows that 10,4% of all men in South Africa are employed in management positions whereas only 6,1% of all females are employed as managers. This would seem to differ from the 95,2% gender equality claimed by parity statistics (UN 2015). Although parity aims at achieving equal representation between members of management, statistical processes and practices have not yet addressed differentiations between genders or the relationships that maintain gender inequality (Moorosi 2006; Morell & Epstein's 2012).

Furthermore, equality initiatives in terms of income and resources, for example, are applied in accordance with parity results. The statistical evidence provided in Gender statistics of Africa (2011:39) reflects parity results of income and wages between men and women as being unequal. I divided wages in South Africa into 1) minimum wages R0–1000 and higher wages R16000+. In the first category, 20% of all South African women earn minimum wages, whereas only 9,7% of men do so. In terms of the second category, only 5,4% of women's salaries fall into this category whereas 11,0% men's do.

Thus, gender parity not only contributes to the maladministration of resources and funds but is also applied in the belief that gender parity results and policy outlines and initiatives point to the equal status of men and women (Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015).

The maladministration of fund and resources are based on the statistical evidence of presumed equality, therefore, the numerical representation suggests that genders are therefore equal and funds allocated on the presumed equal positions between the genders.

Moreover, the Gender Gap Report (2016) reflects that only 55% of women in South Africa contribute to an economic sector, which includes educational environments, whereas 69,1% of men are formally employed. A United Nations report on women and poverty claims that two-thirds of poverty-stricken countries are based women in rural areas. Accordingly, South Africa's claims to gender equality are doubtful as a completely different perspective is revealed when investigating women in the current education and economic environments (UNFPA 2016).

According to a Mail and Guardian online report (4 May 2017), South Africa is degenerating in terms of equality. South Africa was ranked fourth in 2012 out of 84 OECD countries but in 2015 had dropped to 90th position out of 148 countries. So what differences lie between our internal parity results and those of international organisations?

In light of the conflicting results achieved by parity measures, the question to ask is what does parity measure, or rather how or perhaps who measures parity results?

As Taylor (2013) and Loots and Walker (2015) argue, while parity reflects the numerical values of males and females in specific positions in the education sector, it is unclear what is actually counted, by whom it is counted and at what level it is counted (Taylor 2013; Loots & Walker 2015).

The indicators used for parity results focus on identifying constraints to gender equality, not how these constraints contribute to gender inequality or possibly how these may be resolved (Cornwall & Rivas 2015:206). Furthermore, parity seems to involve a narrow field of measurements, relies strongly on equal representation numbers and has no social justice goals, (Taylor 2013).

In light of the process and aims of gender parity, the *Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment Policy* (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014) sustains numerical values instead of equality. The policy states that numerical reports should be submitted annually and biannually for the purpose of evaluation to validate numerical progress and draft action plans, and accept help and guidance to improve numerical values, with the aim of achieving a 50% workforce division (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

The concepts of parity and equality do not achieve, instate or relate to the same processes and practices, therefore they do not achieve the same goals, as illustrated in the gender policy (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Loots & Walker 2015). Thus, if used interchangeably, gender equality will become substituted for gender parity. Similarly, the concepts of gender equality and gender equity are used interchangeably, resulting in two distinct issues: the focus is equality but we actually measure parity, as well as focusing on parity for the purpose of sustaining and supporting equality (Baily &Holmarsdottir 2015; Powell 2005).

Similarly, gender parity seems to have become an umbrella term under which gender equity and equality are spontaneously achieved (Chilisa & Ntseane 2015). Thus the misconception of equality is being processed and practically achieved in education is created and maintained through the continuous counting of male versus female numbers in top management levels (Baily &Holmarsdottir 2015).

The question arises as to how parity achieves equality and equity and, more importantly, how it has become synonymous. The focus of gender equality and equity has shifted from equal treatment of the genders to the numerical value one can attach to the representation of the genders (Powell 2005; Loots & Walker 2015).

Ahl (2000), however, rejects the idea of numeric representation as gender equality cannot be counted by numbers, nor presented though percentages and statistical evidence.

Similarly, Moorosi (2006) and Morell and Epstein (2012) argue that the same can be said about gender parity initiatives: by reducing equality and equity to numerical, measurable goals, the relational qualities and practice of inequality are neglected between males and females of different positional statuses.

However, Blackmore (2014) argues that policy assists in the segregation and differentiation of genders, especially when numerical values are assigned to positions of gender. This process, as described by Blackmore (2014), encourages even more emphasis on the numerical differences between genders, which then becomes the focal point instead of the resolution of gender inequality. Accordingly, policies and gender issues have become entangled in the numerical process used to determine gender progress instead of gender equality, thus resulting in the development of gender blindness as well as gender discrimination (Blackmore 2014; Morley 2014; Acker, Collard & Reynolds 1999).

Gender blindness not only encourages the interchangeable nature of gender concepts in practice but also allows for the support of gender parity (Blackmore 2014; Morley 2014), thereby ignoring the relationships between genders as a key area for exploration when addressing gender inequality (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015).

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Accordingly, Ahl (2000) notes that gender is socially constructed, gender is not property but a relationship, and gender is historically and culturally embedded in educational practices. Thus, policies aim at achieving gender mainstreaming ideals through the process of assigning numerical values and statistics as practice and relationships remain unexplored (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

Gender mainstreaming, according to Powell (2005; see also ECOSOC 1997:2; Karlsson 2010), involves a transformational process whereby women are not just progressed or added into positions but changes are initiated in values, policies and institutes which thereby develop the goals and aims to enhance and develop gender equality and not gender parity.

The aim of gender mainstreaming, equal positional progression and shared gendered aims and outcomes maintains fictitious advertising of educational endeavours due to the focus in practice being of parity. As well as resulting in the creation of a fictitious equality in educational environment in which women and men plausibly participate to maintain these pretences (Ahl 2000).

The idea, or rather the perception, of equality is encouraged by adding women to perceived higher authority positions which numerically fit the criteria of gender parity, whilst the practices of inequality remain the same (Morley 2014; Blackmore 2014). Women may be progressed to higher positions but it would seem that these positions are of an administrative nature (Morley 2014).

Furthermore, the position of authority does not necessarily mean that anything has changed, as numbers do not address or change educational practices or the relationships between genders (Morley 2014; Blackmore 2014). As Hirdman (1992:230) argues, gender is maintained through the structures that exist in the relationships between men and women. Thus parity cannot address or quantify the relationships between genders nor can it encourage progress within these relationships.

UNFPA (2016) describes the situation in South Africa, as "despite the conducive factors, discriminating practices, social norms and persistent stereotypes continue to shape inequitable opportunities, resources and power for women". This has occurred through the focus on parity results which have become interchangeable with equality and equity.

O'Manique and Fourie (2016) state that the MDGs were drafted at the Beijing Annual World Conference for Women in 1995 and were aligned with the intention to use parity as an indicator and measurement for equality. The purpose of the MDGs was to establish women in positions equal to males through the application of gender equality initiatives which were numerically determined (O'Manique & Fourie 2016).

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Furthermore, the Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014) not only supports the apparent confusion between gender equality, equity and parity but also applies parity as an indicator for transformation and the achievement of the MDGs, as well as the aims set out by gender mainstreaming.

In contrast, with regard to policies and practices of parity, Bloome and Bailey (1992) argue that one should explore the intertextuality in relationships, thereby understanding how relations contribute and attribute to contextual inequality which has not been addressed by either policy or parity.

The intertextuality of gender relations is dependent upon an understanding of the social and cultural context, the formation of relationships that lead to inequality, as well as the actions, processes and practices in the working environment. In that way the focus on equality instead of parity is maintained in an attempt to enable empowerment and progress for women as stated in policy (Bloome & Bailey 1992).

Ahl (2000) argues that research has focused on man as the standard for numerical measures and progress instead of women as the individual teacher, as stated in the policy for achieving equity (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014). Furthermore, visible inequality has disappeared and been reconstructed due to the shift in education which focus on parity thereby neglecting of gender relationships.

By exploring the aim of gender parity, which involves the equal positions of males and females within the hierarchical structures of the educational environment, it is crucial to explore the structure of these positions between the genders (Ahl 2000). Hierarchical structures are reinforced by social processes as well as the boundaries and positions stipulated in gender policies, which allocate authority and power to a specific gender.

Hierarchical structures in educational institutions not only imply the allocation of position and authority but also the opportunity for accepting or rejecting the power relations between genders within these positions. Parity thus fails to acknowledge and address the correlation between relationship, genders and positions (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Powell 2005).

Consequently, the field of gender relations has not yet been qualitatively or holistically studied, as most organisations and educational institution appear to be satisfied with numerical parity statistics which are in line with policy documents (Acker et al 1999; Heiskanen 2006). Thus, the idea, or rather the perception, of equality is encouraged by adding women to perceived higher authority positions to satisfy gender parity outcomes (Morley 2014; Blackmore 2014).

Similarly, the processes in which parity is actualised in educational environments contradict the processes and practices established for the purpose of achieving equality (Cornwall & Rivas 2015). A top-down approach is used to evaluate and implement parity in contrast to the bottom-up approach required for equality (Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Powell 2005). The top-down approach used for parity guarantees an inaccurate promise of equality, as structural changes to positions are only addressed and changed at management level while the lower levels remain unchanged (Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Powell 2005).

Equality requires a bottom-up approach in which changes are facilitated and implemented from the grassroots level upwards (Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Powell 2005). Furthermore, a lack of understanding of the differences between parity and equality, as well as the fact that both are used interchangeably, has resulted in confusion about the approaches used to achieve gender mainstreaming goals (Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Powell 2005).

The top-down parity approach has resulted in two distinct issues: firstly, the actual issues experienced by females are not addressed by policies and processes during decision-making, and secondly, the relationship between the genders has been neglected within the functional and social context of schools, resulting in maintained traditions and habitual practices of inequality, as well as the creation of a gender-blind educational environment (Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Powell 2005).

In light of the current argument, parity has also encouraged the division of authority and power between genders at managerial level because gender itself signifies power.

This not only eludes contradictions and irregularities in practice, but also increases tension between policy processes and practice. Thus, people in managerial positions have the ability to navigate, manipulate and control the working environment through the application of either gender parity or gender equality approaches.

Furthermore, management therefore also has the ability to influence gender relations directly in the working environment by applying the authority and power inherent in the positions assigned to them by policy and practices.

10.1.1 Management

The management and leadership functions of coordination, control and cohesion maintain and develop gender relations through participation in activities and delegation of labour, responsibilities and professional development, as well as by maintaining gender expectations according to the outlined initiatives of the Department of Basic Education policies (Pudrovska & Karraker 2014; Connell 2010; Rarieya 2013).

The function of management is to coordinate labour and responsibilities between men and women in lower authority positions and junior positions according to policy, as well as to establish and maintain gender relations (Connell 2010; Akram et al 2015; Priola 2010).

Management functions include the cohesion and control of the actions and reactions of individuals in a working environment to contribute to the school's functioning and the performance of tasks and activities (Dahl 1961, cited in Akram et al 2015). The function of control is to enable management and leadership to allocate work responsibilities, workload and progression within the education context to specific individuals and genders, in accordance with legislation and policy (Karlsson 2010; O'Manique & Fourie 2016). Management and leadership functions are performed at various levels of the educational context; these include departmental, tertiary, secondary school and primary and pre-primary school levels.

At the departmental level of the education sector, decision-making processes are conducted to control and manage all levels of the education sector to ensure the alignment and standardisation of policies and processes pertaining to gender. The decisions made at this level will affect and reflect on the whole system through the implementation of policies downward to the primary and secondary school level; they will also be reflected in the practices and processes implemented in quintile 1-5 schools (Hirdman 1992:230, cited in Ahl 2000, see also Karlsson 2010).

However, as has been argued, the process in which policies are drafted and implemented is based on presumed equality brought about by parity results and the presumed standardised education systems, especially among secondary schools. This not only results in unevenly mobilised gender relations but becomes a power-driven process (Akram et al 2016).

Moorosi (2006) argues that policies function in terms of presumed gender equality based on gender parity.

However, he acknowledges that stereotypical roles as well as a sexist division between management, leadership positions and women exist. Thus, policies fail to address the mechanisms of promotion to leadership positions alongside the failure to address the power which is vested in the ability to allocate positions of management or leadership to males or females (Moorosi 2006; Blackmore 2014). Hence, they disempower women through their application and enactment together with the power relationships that exist between genders.

Power is applied as a form of control as part of management and leadership functions.

If it is unevenly applied to skewed gender perspectives it results in the uneven distribution of professional positions, labour division and resources (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Chilisa & Ntseane 2010).

As argued in the preceding discussion, the phases of empowering women to management have been conflicted by actual process; 2) support and representation; and 3) the woman's ability to succeed at management level (Moorosi 2006). Why have the initiatives and policies for gender equality not achieved the desired effect?

Processes and practices of believed equality which are aligned and established by policies take on different educational perspectives, especially at management level (Moorosi 2006). Similarly, the policies that assign power, authority and position take two specific approaches, theoretical and idealist (Moorosi 2006). The first approach, the theoretical approach, entails theory and policy, whereby specific steps, processes and practices are changed to enable women to progress from various positions to management positions. In this way, women will be empowered and enabled to develop the skills and experiences required to succeed at management level.

The second approach, the idealist approach, considers how policy and practices have the intention and theoretical ideal of women being progressed to management positions and allowing for the development of women; however, these ideals remain future orientated. Thus, the beliefs and ideals are theoretically initiated and supported by legislation and policy but remain merely future-orientated goals, which still have to be achieved (De Clercq 1997).

Therefore, women are superficially guaranteed progression in the future, but in terms of the current management and leadership orientation, the goal of gender equality remains postponed for future reference (Blackmore 2014; Connell 2010). Thus gender is not only being replicated through decisions made at the department level, but is also perpetuated through the inadequate processes applied by secondary school management, in an attempt to coordinate the school environment according to gender initiatives and gender parity (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Chilisa & Ntseane 2010).

The lack of understanding of parity and equality at management and leadership level nullifies the attempt to address discriminating factors in the education (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Chilisa & Ntseane 2010). Parity has resulted in the fight for increased representation, but has not yet challenged the functions and positions of management itself, or begun to explore the qualitative elements vested in the selection and acceptance of female management (Morley 2014; Chilisa & Ntseane 2010).

The secondary impact of gender issues in educational and secondary schools is replicated and demonstrated in the structures of school management teams. Management structures in secondary schools are based on two separate models and approaches: 1) a top-down approach to the implementation of decisions and measures which affect practice, and 2) a bottom-up approach where lower positions report to those in authority (Fuller 2010, Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015; Morley 2014).

Both approaches entail that position and authority govern schools and practices. The position of gender within these structures is crucial for determining the impact of policy implementation, as the way gender is perceived and negotiated within these structures and positions will govern and coordinate relationships in practice.

Accordingly, policy outlines reporting structures in educational contexts that directly cultivate and support gendered positions and ideals.

By reporting to the current male-dominated management found in schools, male superiority and authority over lower teaching positions are encouraged and the gender-based ideal of male authority and leadership and the fallacy that females are incapable of performing such tasks are perpetuated (Morley 2014; Blackmore 2014).

By exploring the way these structures navigate education, as gender relations are manifested within them, we may understand how gender inequality has remained a persistent pattern in the presence of ongoing confusion between parity and equality, as described in the Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

Moorosi (2006:65) argues that although women can be progressed to these positions, current management does not encourage this or ensure women have the skills and the experience to perform successfully in a historically male-dominated management system (Moorosi 2006).

According to Ahl (2000), the issue of transformation and change in educational structures to allow women greater access to positions was embedded in a system that was built for male dominance. Females will fail at management and leadership level in spite of the fact that they have access to these positions. Due to the nature of responsibility and authority which males attach to their gender, and how this dictates their behaviour at this level? Female success at the leadership and management level is measured against male criteria and the ability to coordinate and control the work environment through authoritarian behaviour.

The process of identifying, qualifying and evaluating females for the purpose of professional development and labour division as well as decision-making is based on masculine measurements and assessment. The question then arises as to why this has not yet been changed in view of the fact that equality is a long-standing educational issue.

Generally, males are associated with leadership and management while females are associated with administrative tasks; thus, females are underutilised as an educational resource and are positioned accordingly (Morley 2014; Fuller 2010). Male dominance benefits from the perspectives, measures and criteria embedded in educational structures and traditions, reproducing and harbouring unequal gender practices and positions through the practices of decision-making and labour division (Morley 2014; Fuller 2010). Therefore, the existing criteria and qualifications for professional development and promotions should be reviewed and redrafted to ensure a more holistic and gender equal process for assessment and development. In light of this argument, a larger more holistic approach should be taken to understand how structural changes can be initiated to the benefit of women (Moorosi 2006).

Despite the fact that certain structural changes should be initiated, policies have only been symbolically changed, as failure to monitor and implement these changes has resulted in their neglect in schools (Moorosi 2006). In addition, the emphasis which is placed on training and skills development for women to enable progression to management and leaderships positions remains symbolic, as no intervention has been introduced to ensure that this actually happens in practice (Moorosi 2006).

The approach currently taken focuses on critical mass or numerical majority representation of women as determining factors for progression and the successful evaluation of policies and initiatives (Blackmore 1999). Accordingly, structural barriers for women have not yet been eliminated to enable increased representation of women in management positions.

Blackmore (1999; see also Meyerson 2000) argues that in educational environments emphasis is placed on the progression of individual women to management and leadership positions to obtain more equitable and gender equal representation, rather than focusing on the establishment of equitable practices and processes for decision-making and labour division and promotions for all women (Blackmore 1999; Meyerson 2000).

Thus, the construction and design of policies and legislative actions highlights the fact that while government organisations acknowledge the existence of gender inequality, and symbolically encourage gender equity and equality, only superficial resolutions are proffered instead of actual resolve for women (Blackmore 1999 & Meyerson 2000).

Similarly, Baily and Holmarsdottir (2015; see also Chilisa & Ntseane 2010) argue that symbolic changes result in equality remaining a theoretical concept in educational contexts, leading to women being mismanaged as a human resource and neglected with regard to professional promotional opportunities, as stated in the Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment Policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

When analysing the current ratio between men and women in leadership and management positions, which reflects a ratio of 3:1, it is evident that men still outnumber females (SACMEQ 2011; Stats SA 2015). In view of this, how has parity resulted in equal positions as stated in gender policies and the Commission on Gender Equality Act (39 of 1996)? Moreover, bearing in mind that females comprise 51,2% the South African population (SACMEQ 2011; Stats SA 2015), and if parity statistics enable equitable processes and practices in educational environments, why are leadership and management positions, in the main, still held by men?

The crux of the matter is therefore the following: representation in positions does not equate to fair and equitable processes and numerical representation cannot be equated to equality or equity (O'Manique 2016; Powell 2005). Together with the numerical values which confuses the aims and purposes of equality, position allows for the manipulation and exploitation of power and authority. Power and authority allows for the manipulation of perceptions of equality in numerical values therewith maintaining unequal relationships and gender statuses.

10.2 Power

Power is a negotiated and manipulated relationship between the various individuals, processes and practices that organise and coordinate the working environment of organisations, and secondary schools in particular. Power is vested in management practices and leadership activities (Akram et al 2016).

Currently, policies and reform initiatives cannot holistically encapsulate persistent patterns of gender inequality owing to the measuring instruments and the focus on parity statistics, which cannot numerically represent the current situation in educational practices (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015). Moreover, power cannot be statistically analysed or quantitatively measured, as it is embedded in relationships of communication and disciplinary measures of control and authority, which are not evident in numerical calculations but are present in the climate and culture of the school (Foucault 1978).

Parity has been largely adopted by most departments as the main indicator for gender equality and thus the focus has moved from the professional and personal empowerment of women to the numerical representation of women in power and positions of authority (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015).

Secondly, this empowerment is seated in the ability to exercise power over others and create and maintain relationships that support superiority and authority in the working environment. The negotiation of these relationships is vested in the ability and authority to make decisions, advance professionally and participate in the division of labour as an organisational activity. Accordingly, power is not situated in these activities per se but concerns the authority to implement and construct relationships between males and females (Loots & Walker 2015; Taylor 2013).

If we dissect and explore the conceptual boundaries of empowerment as a form of equality it becomes even more evident that gender is a long way from being resolved. Empowering women can be seen as a form of power and enables personal and professional authority to be exercised over others of lower rank and position. Thus, have women been disempowered or have men just empowered themselves through professional development and the delegation of activities in educational practices?

In exploring the concept of women's empowerment, it becomes clear that it is used in policy vocabulary and processes. In addition, the Commission on Gender Equality Act (39 of 1996) assumes that power can be bestowed upon women; therefore, power can also be taken away from women – power is something that can be owned and transferred between individuals and which is decided by authority, which is contradictory as power cannot be owned (Loots & Walker 2015; Taylor 2013). What remains crucial is to determine how empowerment is enacted and negotiated within the sociological power relationships between genders in relation to decision-making, the delegation of responsibilities and professional development.

As argued in the preceding discussion, the concept of equality has become interchangeable with that of the empowerment of women to occupy specific positions, thus achieving parity outcomes.

This not only contradicts the point of equality but also enables male leadership to control and delegate power within the school context (Cornwall & Rivas 2015:405; Taylor 2013).

Empowerment should be challenged and explored as a variation of power which enables personal development in professional environments (Taylor 2013).

The empowerment of women will result in the challenging of current power structures and relationships, and what has been socially practised and understood as gender roles and responsibilities (Taylor 2013; Cornwell & Rivas 2015).

When challenging these processes of assumed gender equality, it is crucial to address power as a functional element and a disciplinary measure vested in decision-making, delegation of responsibility and work, and the promotion of males and females, which tend to become habitual processes (Bourdieu 1977, cited in Francis & Paechter 2015).

Habitual traditions or the recurrence of power structures and relationships is a systematic process which is continuously navigated in the educational environment through communication (Jackson & Mazzei 2012). Communication serves as basis for exerting and negotiating power within educational contexts and personal professional relationships. Although power is not bound to a single individual it is largely dependent on the individual's personal capacity to construct knowledge of themselves within the educational community in relation to others (Wang 2011; Jackson & Mazzei 2012).

The construction of knowledge of the environment will result in the reproduction of behaviour that sustains sociological power relations and practices, and becomes a legitimised process of dominance and subordination, which reinforces gender inequality (Jackson & Mazzei 2012). If we were to consider this process in the light of gender equality and women empowerment it becomes evident that through the process of negotiating and constructing sociological power relationships, equality and equity are not implemented nor are the organisational needs of individuals provided for to enable gender-equal statuses. However, women support and sustain this process by not challenging their positions and the power relations in regard to other females and males within specific positions of management functions (Morley 2014; O'Manique 2016). Thus one must question whether women are aware of their positional disadvantages, which in turn results in questioning whether gender and the power to advance gender equality amongst employees is noticed in education.

As all the elements in a working environment contribute to gender issues and practices, the extent to which gender is replicated through power and authority in actuality should be explored. In this way, the process in which power structures are replicated and maintained through the structure (positions) present in a secondary school, and the relations which are maintained by both males and females in which power is produced to facilitate management functions of organisation, cohesion and control, may be understood (Gaventa 2003).

Connell (2010) argues that the processes of gender identification, resource allocation and promotion encourage unevenly allocated and mobilised power structures and relationships.

The distinction between males and females in practice, policies and legislation, becomes greater as positions and responsibility are evaluated to determine unequal relational qualities and gender parity results.

Gender in itself is a process and a strategy of power, which reproduces unequal relations and processes to advantage the individual personally, thereby disadvantaging others for personal gain through the control and manipulation of the working environment. Power becomes a method for maintaining gendered relationships and controlling individuals' conduct in the environment (Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015).

Thus, power has a transformative capacity when treated as an agent or a method to control conduct, especially when power is considered as a structural quality (Giddens 1984; Gaventa 2003). All events and practices thereby depend on the intervention of the individual who has the ability to exercise power within the relationship. However, power relationships have to be accepted within these relationships before power can be reproduced. Accordingly, if the relationships exist between male and female management and teachers, both must accept the exercising of constructed power before it can become a habituated or a productive pattern within the relationship. Therefore, understanding the acceptance of power results is questioning how women have manoeuvred themselves into submissive positions in regard to decision-making, promotional opportunities and labour division

Hence, as Foucault (1984 & Akram et al 2015) argues, power becomes a technique and a strategy used in the social context as a disciplinary measure, strategy and structure which is productive (Jackson & Mazzei 2012). Power, as a disciplinary measure, entails the coordination and control of the working environment for the purpose of achieving the goals and aims set by the education department, as well as the authority to achieve like-mindedness among the subjects in the working environment. Power as discipline further actualises and becomes a necessary process in coordinating relationships to enable progression and structure in the educational environment.

Power as strategy, however, is the process in which an individual chooses to manipulate the influential role he or she might have based on the ability to make decisions and manage relationships together with the authority in practice to do so. Power is then not only used to achieve cohesion but is also implemented with specific intentions to obtain results that ensure personal and professional gain.

Accordingly, if the strategy or method with which power is manipulated to fit the organisational needs in practice is challenged, it will result not only in the restructuring of the enactment and implementation but also in symbolic changes in behaviour, practices and traditions to reform and change the strategy but achieve the same results. Consequently, the different domains in an organisation will shift and be adapted to fit the power strategies as support mechanisms. Hence, gender, which is one of the relational domains in education, is manipulated through power strategies which are applied and supported through the enactment and manipulation of power to support the unequal statuses that exist between men and women.

If we challenge the exercise of power as a function to coordinate and delegate authority, we need to address the way such functions have become traditions or habits of professional practice. Power as a disciplinary measure is then use to coordinate the actions and reactions of males and females, in which gender inequality is then manifested.

Gender inequality is manifested in the ability of those in of authority to navigate the education using control and discipline, which subsequently determine the behaviour expectations and positions of males and females (Akram et al 2015; Gaventa 2003). Power as a strategy is dependent on the aims and outcomes which become actionable in the working environment and is predetermined by policy objectives (Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015).

But how is power implicated in the aims and outcomes? The process in which the aims and outcomes are enacted and embodied in the decision-making process enables and implicates the unequal terms negotiated between males and females (Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Powell 2005). If females are introduced to male power strategies, which prefer dominance, they may be subjugated into lower positions through the manipulation of power strategies related to decision-making and the division of labour regarding extramural activities, responsibilities and promotions (Ahl 2000; Foucault 1954–1984).

Are women and most schools aware of these internal processes which govern the social context of the working environment? How have these processes and practices remained unnoticed in evaluation and parity results?

Policies not only stipulate the aims and outcomes which should be attained but also become a control mechanism and power strategy for the purpose of organising individuals and the activities vested in management and leaderships (Dahl 1961, cited in Akram et al 2015). Policies are used to exercise, enforce and implement power within the education sector; they are mechanisms of power and has been constructed by department of education as a form of governance for the purpose of controlling the population (teachers) (Dahl 1961, cited in Akram et al 2015).

Policies act as strategy for power and a tool for the demarcation of power within positions of authority and decision-making; thus power is implied through the allocation of responsibility but coincides with the division of labour and authority.

The governance of teachers, at school level, is structured in accordance with the rules, regulations and process articulated in policies (Blackmore 2014; Karlsson 2010; O'Manique & Fourie 2016). Therefore, individuals' behaviour will be recreated to sustain these protocols in which power is shared and negotiated through interaction between males and females; one will accept dominance and the other a subjugated position based on authority and gender, hierarchy and power relationships (Francis & Paechter 2015; Akram et al 2015).

Thus, power is not only used to navigate and organise school activities and processes to ensure cohesion among the staff; it is also enacted to manage and control relationships in the working environment to recreate and sustain current traditions, structures and decision-making authority. Accordingly, gender and power are interwoven into the practical and procedural education structures as well as being manipulated to restructure and control relationships among individuals to maintain authoritarian power and governance within the leaderist positions. Therefore, gender and power must be dualistically explored, analysed and interpreted using qualitative research to enable progress in the field of gender equality at secondary school level.

Gender cannot be studied in isolation as the method and contextual process and patterns of multiple forms of power are embedded in the functional practices of the school. Gender inequality is hidden within these practices and functions as accepted natural process and hierarchy of understanding.

Bourdieu (1977, cited in Francis & Paechter 2015) called the process of wielding power and its implications for gender relations the "doxa". This implies that gender relations will remain uncontested, even though the secession of power might favour one gender over another.

Therefore, gender inequality has become a self-sustaining process created through untethered sociological power relations between genders, both within the education system and within the boundaries of policies and the positions of males and females.

Policy design overlooks male-dominant structures, and parity measures and statistics become a barrier to equality. In addition, there is a lack of qualitative research to explore gender inequality holistically.

Failure to explore these structures of power, leads to the failure to understand the unequal power relationships within school structures and the intertwined relationships between power and gender (Sawer 2004 cited in Johnson 2015:701).

Dismantling the relationship between gender and power might prove difficult as both are applied and practised in conjunction with one another (Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015; Martino 2008). Accordingly, the implications and understanding of how power contributes to current gender inequality or equality policy reforms is of the utmost importance (Johal 2014 cited in Akram et al 2015). Power and gender are not visible processes and cannot be isolated from one another but they can be understood within the processes of decision-making, labour division and professional development in secondary schools.

As previously argued, power structures and relationships must first be accepted by the parties involved before they can be enacted and constructed; thus, there is a need to understand if power is avoided, contested or resisted in the different gendered relations among individuals and practices. Such acceptance or avoidance practices in a work culture will develop through the reproduction of habits, actions and interaction between males and females thus reproducing gender parity ideals within the gender political context (Pudrovska & Karraker 2014; Acker 1999).

10.3 Gender politics

Gender politics describes the interaction between the genders; these relationships can be influenced or manipulated by acceptance, resistance or avoidance strategies, which individuals apply in the working environment to manage differences, positions and understandings of one another (Priola 2007; Padilla Carmona & Martinez-Garcia 2013). The principle of parity would be reproduced within the interaction and relationships which are navigated in accordance with power structures within the relationship.

Gender interactions and relationships will be influenced by the individual's self-concept, self-perception and self-awareness, which will be communicated through social interaction with others. The self-development of the individual's identity and self-concept will determine the method of negotiating in the gender political field of the educational environment (Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015). The way in which females in the education sector perceive themselves, in relation to others, will influence the sociological interactions and relationships between them and the male teachers, senior male management and male departmental heads (Pudrovska & Karraker 2014).

This being said, the understanding of gender parity will be reflected within the relationships these relationships as well as the individual's self-perception.

An understanding of the individual's perception of their position in relation to others, in an equal position or in a senior management position will determine the nature of the relationship as well as believed parity ideals (Akram et al 2015; Hay 2002). Males and females navigate and negotiate these relationships in the gender political domain in relation to one another in accordance with numerical representation of genders. It is within this process that women are believed to be subjugated into the lesser roles and positions and to be passed over for professional development, promotional opportunities and fair and equitable labour divisions. As parity in states an equal numerical representation of each.

The individual's acceptance of imposed management measures and strategies will determine how they interact with others in the environment (Hay 2002; Francis & Paechter 2015; Haywood 2008). This leads to the construction of professional relationships based on gender and accepted hierarchical authority as well as the numerical values of parity.

If females accept their gendered positions, they will recreate their understanding of themselves when interacting with males and inform other females of the same behaviour as well as position (Johal 2014, cited in Akram et al 2015). Through this process, females may perceive themselves as being in a gender unequal position to males. Males will, in turn, understand themselves to be superior to females and expect the same behaviour from other females (Acker 1999; Fuller 2010).

Gender inequality thus becomes a social practice which is recreated by females and maintained by males within a specific gender political domain (Taylor & Rampino 2013; Fuller 2010). In this environment, gender relations are reproduced and maintained through positions of management and leadership. However, females can resist such sociological perceptions in the work environment. If a female perceives herself to be equal to males, she will resist the imposed rules and positional discrimination of males.

Although gender parity might at first glance appear to support equality between genders, it is however just bound to the positions and not how the relationships are negotiated. This resistance to unequal relations will, however, increase interpersonal conflict (Acker 2012; Morley 2014), which may arise from forced professional stagnation in junior positions, gendered responsibilities, work division and decision-making processes (Fuller 2010; Morley 2014). If resistance is encountered, structural practices and process will be redefined to ensure coordinated relations and environment (Francis 2010 cited in Francis and Paechter 2015).

This redefinition will ensure that the same positions and relations are maintained by males and females through the reconstruction of sociological power relationships.

Females can avoid confronting unequal relational statuses by adhering to the social expectations and expected behaviour of senior male management. In this regard, avoidance practices and strategies may be understood as conforming to and accepting the gendered positions, labour division and relationships (Fuller 2010). Females, who are newly introduced to a community, are then likely to be exposed to these relations as well as numerical representation (Haywood 2008).

Exposure to these tradition and relations is crucial as the newly introduced individual will be habituated through practices and encouraged to adhere to current and existing social relationships between men and women. If the individual is female, she will be treated and positioned in accordance with other females (Connell 2010; Francis & Paechter 2015). Understanding this process is crucial, as the newly introduced individual needs to understand their gendered responsibilities, behaviour and position in relation to senior male management and other junior female teachers in this community (Mannell 2012; Fuller 2010).

In addition, it is important to understand how junior female teachers have adapted and negotiated their behaviour in relation to senior male management within sociological power relations, as it will enable us to understand the persistent pattern of gender inequality as well as confusion between gender equality and gender parity. It will also allow an understanding of the current social environment to enable social transformation towards gender equality and equity instead of gender parity.

Conclusion

Worldwide, governments and policymakers have realised that the statistics related to gender inequality remain troublesome, as gender parity negates gender equality purposes and aims (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Morley 2014). The statistical measures assumed to illustrate current gender equality have neglected to compensate and account for the qualitative relations between power and gender in educational practices.

Both policies and educational organisations use gender parity and equality as interchangeable concepts (Loots & Walker 2015; Powell 2005), thereby assuming that gender parity and equality achieve the same results and purposes. However, this process has resulted in the neglect of gender relationships vested in position, authority and gender, thus resulting a paucity of both literature and current policy reform (Loots & Walker 2015; Powell 2005).

Similarly, the unequal nature of sociological power relations has been ignored in relation to promotional progress, labour division and decision-making between senior male management and junior female teachers (Taylor & Rampino 2013). Policies and initiatives have failed to encompass the importance of gender and power as an integrated process in educational practices and the enactment of female empowerment, policy initiatives and the functional practices of school management has remained the same because presumed gender has been achieved through numerical values (Taylor & Rampino 2013. For example, statistical analysis has shown that the ratio of males to females in positions of leadership and power is 3:1 (Morley 2014). This statistic does not, however, address the qualitative aspects of equality for women, nor does it help to understand how power strategies and policy measures can contribute to the persistent pattern of inequality in the education sector (Stats SA 2015; Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015).

Hence, the current need to explore the gender relationships that exist between management and teachers, including the way power is vested in the relationships and how these relationships are maintained and negotiated in practices. These aspects have been neglected in the statistical data produced and the quantitative measures applied (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Loots & Walker 2015).

The statistical review of data as a demonstration of equality not explores the way management and leadership are sustained processes of inequality but reproduces, facilitates and habituates traditional practices of gender inequality (Taylor 2013; Moorosi 2006). Moreover, parity has created and sustained a gender-blind educational environment in which both males and females encourage equality in the form of numerical representation (Powell 2005; Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015). Numerical representation cannot account for equality and equity; nor does representation reflect equal statuses between the genders in positions and relationships (Chilisa & Ntseane 2010).

<div align="center">**Chapter 3**</div>

<div align="center">**Methodology**</div>

11.1 Introduction

According to Maree (2010:70–71), "[r]esearch design refers to the underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done".

The research methodology and design comprised a qualitative case study, in which semi-structured interviews were used with the specific intention of addressing the research questions explained in chapter 1. I chose to use a qualitative case study to explore gender and power relations within the context of a secondary school, as it allowed for the investigation and exploration of participants' perspectives. Further, I used semi-structured interviews as this allowed for deviation from the research questions and for the elaboration and exploration of the participants' believed reality.

This chapter also serves to explain the way in which I approached the phenomenon under study in theory and in practice to ensure transparency in my research, thereby enhancing its trustworthiness and credibility. The research methods and the research design allowed for the gathering of quality data, limited possible research bias and assured the validity of the final results and findings. My use of a qualitative case study and semi-structured interviews was underpinned by theoretical perspectives positioned in constructivism and interpretivism,

11.2   Research paradigms

11.2.1 Interpretivism

According to Maree (2010:59), "[i]nterpretivism has its roots in hermeneutics, the theory and practice of interpretation". He further states that "[i]nterpretivism studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them".

Therefore, interpretivism involves the interpretation of an individual's perceptions and the meaning they have assigned to events within a specific social context (Maree 2010:59). Interpretivism was used in this study to understand and explore the socially constructed reality of the participants (male and female) within the context of a secondary school in South Africa. This paradigm or approach contributed to my ability to interpret and explore the meaning that the participants assigned to the socially constructed reality of the secondary school (Maree 2010:59).

The focus remained on the subjective experiences of the participants within this context, the way the participant's derived meaning and explanations for the positions of males and females within the school, how each is assigned work responsibilities and is progressed within the education system.

11.2.3 Constructivism

Elkind (2004; Dudovskiy 2016) asserts that "constructivism is the recognition that reality is a product of human intelligence interacting with the real world". Elkind (cited in Dudovskiy 2016) further maintains that "constructivism accepts reality as a construction of the human mind, therefore, reality is perceived to be subjective". Because knowledge is constructed by the individual, it is not generated in the same way by every individual but will depend on their own social environment and embedded social practices (Dudovskiy 2016).

Accordingly, an interpretivist-constructivist approach was used to understand and gather data. Such an approach allowed for an understanding of the context in which the female and male participants find themselves (Maree 2010).

I was able to interpret the reality of the participants in their natural environment where the research phenomenon, gender relations, is prevalent.

A constructivist-interpretivist approach enabled me to understand the reality that the individual participant had constructed and the way their reality relates to the phenomenon of power, as an embedded structure in gender relations (Dudovskiy 2016). The construction of knowledge is based on the individual's perception. These perceptions form the participant's reality and social context.

The boundaries between the context and the relations of gender are blurred and intertwined (Dudovskiy 2016). Therefore, an in-depth case study and semi-structured interviews were used to identify and interpret the data within the context of one secondary school.

11.3 Qualitative case study design

According to Zaidah Zainal (2007:1–5), "a case study enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study". This allows for the examination and exploration of contextual issues and systemic influences on the specific individual in the context of the environment. Although these influences are secondary. It is important to understand how they contribute to the phenomenon and how the participants derive meaning and in turn co-construct their reality, no matter the scale of the case study.

Although most case studies are small they do allow for a complete understanding of a phenomenon and the exploration of influences and relationships within the specific context (Zainal 2007:3; Yin 1984:23). A case study is a unique way of observing any natural phenomenon that exists in a set of data (Yin 1984:23). By unique it is meant that only a very small geographical area or number of subjects of interest are examined in detail.

11.3.1 Qualitative case study

Maree (2010:50) describes qualitative research as "the attempt to collect rich descriptive data in respect to a specific phenomenon with the intention to develop an understanding of what is being studied or observed".

Baskarada (2013:1; see also Yin 2013:13) describes a qualitative case study as the study of an organisational group and/or individual in which the research has been enabled to collect a deep holistic view and data on the research problem, thereby explaining and understanding the research problem within the context of the study.

Accordingly, a qualitative design was used, because the research entailed an investigation into the real lives of teachers and the characteristics of the power and gender relations between males and females. The study explored these relations in accordance with the day-to-day behaviour of teachers, deriving meaning from these relations in the context of their natural environment with a specific focus on the manifestation of power within a secondary school context. The use of a qualitative design also enabled me to collect descriptive data pertaining to the characteristics of the gender and power relations between male and female teachers at a specific secondary school (Maree 2010:50; Yin 2013:13; Baskarada 2013:1).

Yin (2013:13) states that "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". A case study is therefore appropriate for this study, because it enabled me to understand the role that gender plays in relation to positions of management and leadership and junior teachers at a secondary school in South Africa. The investigation attempted to identify the power structures that contribute to gender relations between male and female teachers in various positions in a secondary school. The investigation thus included the influence and manifestation of power structures and relations within the context of a secondary school.

The limitations of my design are to be found in the fact that a qualitative case study is first and foremost bound by the context of the phenomenon. This eliminates other possible data sets which might prove important in other contexts and environments (Yin 2013:13).

The specific demarcation of the phenomenon allows for a close, in-depth analysis but eliminates the opportunities which might arise outside the chosen group of participants and thus the findings might not prove true in different contexts or under the influence of different variables.

Thus, the generalisability and transferability of the study may be limited and might hinder and/or violate the trustworthiness and credibility of the results (Maree 2010:50). The findings are not necessarily true for the wider population, which can decrease the trustworthiness of the results and findings (Maree 2010:50). A qualitative case study design explores individuals' realities and construction of knowledge and their perceptions and experiences may not necessarily be true for other participants who form a part of the sample (Maree 2010:50).

In which case conflicting data themes and sets might prove to be of no value and might not lead to any conclusions. The data sets and findings must be evaluated in terms of the participants' intentions – if not, the possibility of researcher bias increases.

11.4 Sample

According to Marshall (1996:522), choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project since it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study whole populations.
The size of the sample is determined by the optimum number necessary to enable valid inferences to be drawn about the population. According to Wilmot (2005:25), qualitative research uses "non-probability sampling as it does not aim to produce a statistically representative sample or draw statistical inference". Therefore, non-probability methods entail a process in which not everyone in the population has an equal chance of participation or selection but the sample is selected with specific criteria and specific purpose.

The target population comprised women and management members specifically, but I did not eliminate male participation. Accordingly, both male and female participants were selected to gain a holistic view of both genders' perspectives. The criteria listed below acted as measure for selection of both male and female participants based on their willingness to participate.

The participation of females was based on years of experience at the school as well as their willingness to participate. Years of experience is important as the knowledge and ability to understand the education system, processes and practices depended on exposure to professional and personal relationships, as well as their knowledge and institutional memories of the school at which the research was conducted.

Participants had to have at least three years' experience at the school to understand the decision-making processes and the way gender could possibly be embedded in these practices, the way management and teachers interact and negotiate their positions and genders with one another, and also have knowledge of gender relationships in practice. I acknowledge that years of experience does amount to knowledge and can be enforced as a form of power.

11.4.1 Access and sample selection at the school

I obtained access to the school in the following manner. First I phoned the school and made an appointment with the principal. During this meeting I discussed the outline of my study as well as what I intended to do at the school. Once I had gained access to the school, I confirmed what had been agreed in an email to the principal. In this email I included an indication of how many staff members I intended to interview. I also obtained a time schedule from the school to ensure that the interviews were conducted at an appropriate time.

I then established the location for the interviews at the school. The principal and I arranged a date for me to attend a staff meeting and to introduce myself and my study to the staff and too encourage participation. At this meeting I also explained my aim, outcomes and intentions. In addition, the school sent me a signed letter agreeing to its participation.

The school seemed muddled, very few of the personnel seemed willing to participate in my study. The school is situated in in an urban area in district 4 in Gauteng. It is multicultural and multi-religious English medium school and is both a secondary school and a primary school it is a private institution. The school employs 40 teachers including the school management. Teachers varied in terms of ages, educational background and ethnic group.

I was invited to speak during a morning staff meeting and introduced myself to the staff and the management team. I was unaware of the fact that staff meetings at the school are not compulsory, and thus only five staff members were present. I then contacted one of the management team and asked them to suggest possible opportunities to encourage participation.

The school had only employed five male teachers, of which one is the male principal. Therefore I did not have the opportunity to interview more men. Of the four men at the school, three were in management positions and one was employed as a Grade 12 teacher. Therefore, I collect data from most of the men, who held various managerial positions.

The positions of the 16 female teachers I interviewed differed, as their years of experience and the levels at which they taught in the school varied.

Out of the 16 female teachers interviewed, three were subject heads and one was the principal. The composition of my sample represented the school staff composition, as 40 teachers were employed at the school, of which I interviewed 20. Of the 20 participants, eight held managerial positions and 12 held post-level one positions.

11.5 Data collection

11.5.1 Interview process

I employed semi-structured interviews to attain the information required to answer the research questions outlined in chapter 1. According to the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation (2015) semi-structured interviews are most appropriate when only one opportunity is presented for the interview and only one interview per participant is conducted.

According to Bernard (1988; Cohen & Crabtree 2006) semi-structured interviews provide data that is comparable and reliable as the depth of the interview and the responses provide insight and understanding regarding the phenomenon. The participants have the freedom to express the own ideas and opinions (Cohen & Crabtree 2006).

Semi-structured interviews also provide a clear set of instructions for the interviews and can increase credibility and reliability. The quality of the data collected and the credibility of the data were increased by the selection of participants using two methods, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. By selecting 20 participants I allowed for better time management and for quality interviews to be conducted (Huberman & Miles 1994). In addition, the quality of the data gathered was increased, and I was able to ask all the questions intended to address my research questions properly and attain a clear understanding of gender and power relationships at the school (Huberman 1994; John 2007).

I did however struggle to gain access to willing participants who would allow me to interview them. I overcame this barrier by using the two sampling methods already mentioned to select the participants for the interviews, namely, snowball sampling and purposive sampling.

The use of purposive sampling contributed to the collection of rich information with limited resources within a specific time frame.

I also applied snowball sampling methods to select and interview individuals with specific knowledge and experiences (Patton 2002; Creswell & Plano 2011). In a qualitative case study, purposive sampling and snowball sampling are used to enable the simplification of the study with a specific focus on similarities, and increase the credibility of the results (Patton 2002).

Purposive sampling allowed for the selection of school management members, for example the principal, deputy principal and subject heads, with the intention of, firstly, gathering data from a management perspective and, secondly, exploring the perceptions of management in terms of lower ranking individuals, gender relationships and power structures. I contacted the management team secretary and arranged for an official appointment.

During the meeting with the team member I explained my aims and outcomes and requested them to participate in my study. Only one management member invoked his right not to participate – the male principal. I enquired as to why and he just said that he has no time for research at that point.

I scheduled appointments for the interviews with the other team members. I then deployed a snowball sampling method, asking team members to refer me to teachers and managers that had knowledge of gender relationships in practice. A snowball sampling method is described as a method for selecting participants who are interconnected to one another (Maree 2010:177; Baskarada 2013:4). The use of snowball sampling enabled me to identify other female and male teachers in the secondary school who either shared their experiences and/or had knowledge of gender and power structures at the school (Marshall 1996).

By applying snowball sampling, I eventually gained the trust of the teachers. Furthermore, snowball sampling and purposive sampling allowed me to access 20 participants, of which four were male and 16 female.

I found the interviews themselves quite challenging. The first challenge was addressing the fact that the school only allowed me to use the staffroom for the interviews. I was inclined to believe that participants would feel uncomfortable if I interviewed them in this location. I did ask for another room or classroom in which to conduct the interviews, but management did not have another location available. I overcame this by ensuring the interviews were conducted later in the day when most staff had left and the learners had gone home, thus allowing for privacy during the interview process. The participants did not, however, seem to mind the interviews being held in the staffroom.

During the interview, I tried to create an environment which was conducive to the interview process and that would make the participants feel more at ease by having a cup of coffee before the interview started. I also asked them random questions about their family and the subjects they teach.

One of the difficulties I encountered with the interviews was that some participants seemed in a hurry to finish as they were busy with exams.

I overcame this by adding extra interview time during the school holidays. I also rescheduled the interviews for earlier in the day, which suited the participants more.

The next challenge was that the participants were more inclined to speak about gender issues and educational issues that they found to be relevant. I dealt with these conversations by guiding them back to the questions I had drawn up in the interview schedule.

I supplied all interviewees with a copy of the interview schedule to ensure that they were focused on the aims and outcomes of the interview and were aware of the types of questions I intend to ask (Marshall 1996; Baskarada 2013; Harwell 2008). This seemed to help the participants to answer more effectively and in a more focused way. Some participants demonstrated a need to answer questions according to what they expected I wanted to hear, when probed about the statements the particular participant had no clear reason for their answer. Denscombe (2007) refers to this as "the interview effect".

I countered the interview effect by probing their answers to understand why they had said or believed what they were saying, as well as to explore the possibilities of their answers and refocus their attention on the interview schedule (Maree 2010; Kennedy 2006). The semi-structured interviews enabled me to probe participants' answers for clarification and verification of meanings and perceptions (Maree 2010; Harwell 2008). In this regard, I used elaborative probes that allowed for the investigation and exploration of the participants' responses to understand the intended meaning (Maree 2010; Kennedy 2006). I also applied clarification probes to limit any bias that might occur during the interview process, thereby clarifying responses, determining whether I understood the intentions and responses accurately and confirming the responses (Maree 2010).

Some of the participants I interviewed had no real opinion about gender in educational environments. In such cases, I rephrased the questions to make them more applicable to the participant's field or area of expertise. However, I was still left with interviews that yielded no data that was worth using or that was applicable to my study.

Semi-structured interviews did, however, allow for variation between interviews, data and questions, as each interview was different and the course of the interview depended on the participants' responses (Maree 2010; Newton 2010).

I also encountered participants who were quite easy to interview in the sense that they could relate and share their experiences with me. The flexible framework of semi-structured interviews thus allowed me to deviate from the original questions and investigation the interviewee's realities and responses, which subsequently enabled me to understand the participant's point of view (Maree 2010:87; Bernard 1988; Cohen & Crabtree 2006).

These interviewees generally involved teachers with more experience who had taught at more than one school.

I allowed the participants to share their experiences gained from the various schools they taught at, as I found that this information assisted them in clarifying their current perspective and gendered beliefs.

I did, however, realise that some participants were only made aware of gender in educational environments during the interview process. This tendency was particularly prevalent among the male participants. During such interviews, I allowed the participants to explore the possibilities of gender as an actual element of educational environments. Male participants tended to try and shy away from social and cultural stereotypes of men and answered very superficially. I then encouraged them to explore the male gender identity by adapting the questions to fit the male interviewees better.

I also had to deal with participants who forgot about the interviews, in which case I organised another date or interviewed another participant in their place to ensure that I met the deadlines of the school. I also reassured participants that no one other than me and my professor would have access to the data and thus they did not need to worry about any consequences resulting from their answers.

What I found thwarted about the interview process was that participants were misleading at times, or provided answers which I believed were misleading, or they said what they believed I wanted to hear (the interview effect). One particular participant believed the school was equal, but when questioned about practices process and relationships at the school she become agitated about the unequal statuses and methods used at the school. In the last-mentioned case, I actively questioned their answers to determine why, how and perhaps what led to their answers so as to minimise the effect.

I used a Dictaphone to record the interviews, I discussed the use of the Dictaphone with the participants to guarantee their anonymity and confidentiality.

I recorded the interviews to ensure that data and meanings, as well as the intentions and meanings the participants wished to relate, were accurately recorded (Maree 2010; Dey 1993). In this way I attempted to eliminate any biased assumptions that would be made during the interview process or the possibility of me influencing the interviewee's personal opinions and beliefs (Maree 2010; Dey 1993). The use of a Dictaphone ensures that interviews can be transcribed clearly and precisely (Maree 2010; Bailey 2008). This increased the trustworthiness of the data and minimised research bias (Maree 2010; Bailey 2008).

11.6 Data analysis

Maree (2010:99) defines data analysis as "a range of approaches, processes and procedures whereby researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected from the participants and the phenomenon they have investigated". Thus, themes, codes, relationships and possible patterns within the data were identified.

11.6.1 Transcriptions

I used an independent transcriber to transcribe the data verbatim. This ensured the accuracy of the data captured and enabled me to analyse the data accurately (Maree 2010; Bailey 2008). This increased the trustworthiness of the data (Maree 2010; Bailey 2008). In identifying themes and participants' intended meanings (Maree 2010) an in-depth understanding of the participants' point of view was obtained (Maree 2010; Bailey 2008).

11.6.2 ATLAS.ti

I used ATLAS.ti to analyse my data. This program allowed me to interpret and analyse my data by grouping data together in terms of the themes that emerged and using the inductive codes I developed from the research questions. I thereby eliminated personal bias from the process and increased the trustworthiness of my study.

11.6.3 Coding and the development of themes

I saved the transcribed interviews in the ATLAS.ti program. This enabled me to analyse and code the data according to the themes that emerged from the data. I developed inductive codes, which are, according to Maree (2010:107) "codes that are developed through the process of data analysis". I was then able to explore the meanings and intentions of the participants in accordance with the three major themes, namely, promotions and positions, decision-making, and workload division.

Thus, I could group the data according to the interview schedule and research questions. I then had to analyse the data according to the themes identified in my study from the inductive codes.

11.6.4 Fieldwork

I encountered multiple challenges during the fieldwork. The first was to gain access to the school. The ethical clearance of my study was delayed for four months because only one section of my application was copied and submitted to the reviewers.

My study therefore only started on 3 June 2017. This produced a new set of challenges in regard to my fieldwork, as the first school I approached cancelled my access owing to the delay.

I therefore had to establish a new site where I could conduct my research. Subsequently, the second location approved my research and I was able to conduct my fieldwork.

However, I struggled with the school set up and organisation. Staff meetings were not compulsory and thus access to the staff was restricted.

Furthermore, the school was both a primary and a secondary school, a fact that I was unaware of when making the arrangements. This resulted in the data reflecting both a secondary school and a primary school perspective on gender, thus the area of exploration was greater than anticipated in terms of phases and education levels. However, this did have the advantage of allowing for a greater understanding of gender relationships between education levels, staff and management, which resulted in a more comprehensive understanding of gender in education.

Although I only used one site, participants made specific reference to phases and grades. Moreover, the positions of the participants included different levels and different phases. The school management team proved to be uncooperative and I struggled to reach them to arrange for a meeting, including the possibility of an interview. One staff member ignored all my attempts to contact them. I therefore had to accept that they would not participate in the study.

However, one staff member was very helpful as he encouraged staff to participate and gave me an opportunity to explain my study and the possibility of being interviewed to them. I found that this encouraged participation among staff members. Halfway through the interviews, I became very anxious about the fact that I might not be gathering data that I could use, or perhaps that the interview schedule I had drafted might not be suited to the interviews.

It was only during the initial stages of data analysis, when I found that I had gathered interesting results that the anxiousness faded. I also realised that what I expected to find in the field and what I did indeed find had in some way merged.

I had thought that males would be more prone to gender-biased beliefs but instead found that women show a greater tendency for gender-biased perceptions of males in education, as well as in society. Gender as reflected in the data gathered demonstrated that not only does gender equality remain a misconception that we have grown accustomed to gender-biased processes.

The nature of my study intruded into the interview process, as the differences between the male and the female interview sessions were quite extreme.

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Gender directly infiltrated the interview process between myself and the interviewee. The distinctions between the interview processes were embedded in gender, which I did not expect. For this reason, I will address the interview process within two distinct sections, male and female.

Interviews with males tended more towards a seemingly equal and natural conversation, but as described by Moran (2015), the process in which males are interviewed by females tends towards a gender-biased process of negotiation. I found that males have a tendency to subjugate female interviewers into a lesser position through non-verbal cues as well as the use of certain phrases to exert their superiority (Moran 2015).

Accordingly, I addressed the gendered perceptions during the interview process by establishing the following cues for interviews in which male participants became more focused on my gender than the actual questions. Maintaining confidence during the process is key to establishing and maintaining an equal footing when interviewing men, as well as individuals with higher positions or qualifications. When referring to confidence, this is based on establishing a trust relationship, identifying and anticipating possible questions and gender stereotypes that both males and females may in some cases be prone to due to my gender as well as theirs (Moran 2015).

Confidence can also be maintained and established during an interview by being prepared, and organised, whether it is a gender-based interview or one in which positions are of importance (Moran 2015). Thus I ensured that I was well prepared and punctual. I also eliminated bias from my point of view by not being informed about the participant's history, biographical information or their gender prior to the interview.

I also encountered participants who were in a rush to complete the interview. These particular interviews were short and uninformative. I tried my best to encourage the participant to engage with questions during the interview process.

Instead ended up with interviews that were five to ten minutes in length. During the data analysis, these interviews were rejected, as the data obtained was of no real importance or held no meaning.

Some participants were unaware of the processes and practices at the school. I did attempt to engage with these participants by understanding how they experienced these processes instead of requesting a detailed description of what happened in practice. At the same time, a minority of participants seemed preoccupied with their work and other activities. This led to the interview sounding a bit rushed, as well as the omission of crucial information they did not want to divulge.

The impact of these issues on the data was minimal, but I had to closely interpret and explore in depth the participants' perceptions and statements when writing the data analysis. Nevertheless, most participants were very accommodating and helpful; they engaged with the questions and the interview process, at times tending to dwell on other topics concerning gender.

My use of a semi-structured interview process allowed the participants to respond in a variety of personalised manners. I also found that these conversations had enabled me to understand the participant's point of view better. The data that emerged from these interviews contributed to accurate and specific data analysis, allowing for a greater understanding.

I dealt with each individual participant ethically as well as within their understandings and perspectives. In doing so I was able to analyse and explore the data in accordance with the intended meanings. I conducted 20 interviews for the purpose of gathering data from various sources as well as to increase the quality and trustworthiness of my findings.

11.7 Ethical considerations

According to the Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching (CIRT [sa]), ethics are the norms and standards that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of a researcher. Ethics prevents the fabrication and falsifying of data and evidence and promotes the pursuit of knowledge and truth, which is the aim of research. Ethical guidelines encourage the participation of the public, while the researcher does not violate the public's rights, health and safety, as stated in the guideline (CIRT [sa]).

11.7.1 Ethical clearance

I applied for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria and the Faculty of Education before any fieldwork or research was conducted. This ensured that the research study adhered to the requirements outlined in the ethics application and guidelines.

The questions were unbiased in nature and I did not use leading questions or probe participants according to my interpretation but rather aimed to understand theirs. The interviews, transcriptions and processes carried out during fieldwork were ethical and were explained thoroughly too all participants before commencing with the interviews. Participants also volunteered for the interviews and were not coerced into participation. All actions and decisions that were taken in the study, as well as the aims and purpose of the study, were in accordance with the ethics application.

11.7.2 Informed consent forms

Consent forms were signed by me and the secondary school management team and the teachers before the interview commenced and any recordings were made. I explained the form to each participant before we started with the interviews.

The completion of consent forms ensured that all parties were aware of the aims and purpose of the research, that they had given me permission to conduct the research and that they had been made aware of the sensitivity of the research study.

Thus, the participants understood that their responses should not be based on what they deemed to be appropriate responses or ones I wanted to hear, but should be based on their experiences.

Participation in the research study was voluntary and both the participants and the secondary school had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage of the fieldwork.

11.7.3 Confidentiality agreement

The confidentiality agreements were discussed with the individual participants and stakeholders before any fieldwork was conducted. This agreement ensured that both the participants and the secondary school remained anonymous. I also repeatedly reminded the staff at the school of this fact. No personal information or the content of participants' responses during the interviews was released to the public or to senior management. I did not discuss the interview with anybody, as this could have affected the teachers' work or social standing in the community.

Gender equality is a sensitive socio-political issue and, therefore, no identifying information pertaining to either the participants or the secondary schools were used when conducting the fieldwork and both the participants and the school have remained anonymous.

11.7.4 Sensitive information

Owing to the nature of the study, the participant's information remained confidential. The participants might have felt uncomfortable answering questions and elaborating on their answers but I assured them of their confidentiality and anonymity as I do not use their names, surnames or any identifiable demographic information. Participants were interviewed individually.

I protected the identity of the secondary school and the identities of the participants by not collecting any demographic information such as name and age of the interviewees nor mentioning any such information during the interviews.

Participants may become emotional and it requires sensitivity when exploring their personal views and opinions.

11.7.5 Physical or emotional harm and professionalism

The participants were not exposed to physical or emotional harm during the research. I did not act in an unethical manner and adhered to the code of conduct and guidelines outlined in the ethics user guide. Unethical behaviour refers to the emotional exploitation of participants, encouragement of blame and negative actions against others or personal harm.

Participants were treated with respect during the interviewing process. I remained honest with the participants and acted professionally at all times. I did not exploit the participants at any given time. I remained sensitive to the emotional state of the participants to ensure that they were not influenced by the questions or became too emotional to continue with participation.

11.8 Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985; n.p.):

> Trustworthiness involves establishing the study's credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Therefore the truth of the findings should be accurate, applicable to other contexts, consistent and should be shaped through the participant's responses, interest and motivation and not through research bias.

I validated the data with notes and transcriptions to increase the credibility and dependability of my study (Maree 2010; Davidson 2009). I probed the participants during the interview process to gain an in-depth understanding of their responses and meanings.

I did not generalise the data or the intended meanings of participants, but rather directly coded and quoted during the data analysis.

I refrained from generalising the result, and to increase the validity and reliability of the findings I quoted or referred directly to the participants' interviews during the data analysis (Maree 2010; Davidson 2009). In addition to ensuring the validity of the data and the findings, the use of open-ended questions during the interviewing process meant that I did not attempt to suggest certain views to the participants to support my initial theories.

Data were validated through the use of thick descriptions and a reflection on the data collected was included in the thesis to indicate how the findings and conclusions were made and interpreted. The descriptions were made during and after the interviews had taken place based on the participant's responses, body language and general observations I had made.

This process increased transparency as well as the conformability, dependability and transferability of the research (Maree 2010; Davidson 2009).

The transparency in my study was achieved by making ethical decisions, taking notes and using a recording device to support responses to any enquiries relating to the actual interview.

Accordingly, my study can be transferred onto other education sectors as clear and precise processes and practices were outlined and applied. The results are dependable as research bias was minimised by probing participants during the interviews and avoiding generalisations.

11.9 Conceptual framework

Miles and Huberman (1994) define a conceptual framework as "a visual or written product", one that "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts, or variables – and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 18).

I therefore used a conceptual framework to analyse my data according to three major themes. The themes were identified in accordance with the research questions addressed in chapter 1 and included positions and promotions, decision-making, and the division of work. I wished to analyse gender relations in respect of each of these themes.

11.9.1 Promotions and positions

Promotions and positions in educational environments are directly bound to policy initiatives for the empowerment and progression of females into management and leadership positions to increase female representation. I therefore explored the way positions at the school are defined by gendered practices and understandings of male and female concepts. These practices are directly located in the cultural and traditional methods in the school environment that determine the positions of males and females.

Although women might be progressed into positions of leadership and management this does not necessarily translate into equal gendered practices, statuses or relationships at the school.

Accordingly, the promotional process which is used to progress females and males into higher authority positions, for example management and leadership, is in itself seated in the understanding of male and female identities and social positioning. The perceptions of gender within the processes of promotions are located in our social understanding of males and females. Furthermore, although polices establish and define how women should be progressed into specific positions they do not equate into gender equality in educational environments. Instead, these processes of promotion focus on female representation which is numerically bound to gender parity.

This by default assumes that equity and equality can be achieved and measured numerically. Although it is well known that equity, equality is not equal to gender parity statistics and results. Thus the process in which parity, equality and equity are facilitated in educational environments directly influences how women are progressed and positioned in these environments, as well as how the relationships between females and males in different positions are navigated, coordinated and practised as power relationships and gendered tradition.

11.9.2 School governance and decision making

Decision-making in educational environments is bound to positions of authority, in which policy boundaries and initiatives inform managerial and leadership positions on how gender should be managed and enacted into educational environments. Furthermore, managerial and leadership positions enact policy through the process of decision-making, resulting in the direct management of gender relationships and genders.

Management and leadership are directly responsible for the implementation of policy initiatives, processes and outcomes at the school, through decision-making as a functional process. Decision-making includes coordination, cohesion and control of the working environment with direct reference to relationships, genders and positions between the genders as described in policy documentation.

Accordingly, the process in which the genders are promoted and positioned at the school are determined by the actions and processes established in decision-making and management activities. Therefore, positions and promotions are bound to the functional activities of decision-making and control.

Accordingly, managerial positions are established as power relationships through the ability to navigate the school environment by inform practices and processes by making decisions and having the ability to implement the decisions into actionable plans and goals.

11.9.3 Division of labour

The division of labour is seated in the managerial activity of delegating tasks and responsibilities to genders in a working environment. Tasks and responsibilities refer to the positions of genders in an academic perspective as well as extramural activities. Furthermore, the delegation of activities is performed as decision-making practice in which the perceptions of males and females predetermine the responsibilities that will be delegated to them by management. Thus, the process in which tasks, responsibilities and positions are delegated becomes a gendered practice.

In terms of academic position, genders can be promoted to various positions, such as departmental head or subject head; this promotion is directly enforced through policy and includes possible subject bias where genders are assigned a subject on the basis of their being either male or female. Thus, the delegation of academic workload takes place in accordance with three distinct issues: experience, qualification, and preference.

The same criteria or issues become relevant in terms of extramural activities, as qualifications, experience and preference automatically result in the assignment of specific extramural activities, such as coaching sport, cultural activities or academic extra classes.

Therefore, positions and promotions are directly dependent on the decision-making activities attached to managerial positions, positions which in turn are responsible for delegating specific responsibilities and tasks to either gender whether it be academic, extramural or positional practices.

Data analysis

I analysed the data according to three major themes: gendered positions and professional development, school governance and decision-making as well as labour division. These themes served as umbrella concepts for the explanation and exploration of the research study I conducted. The first theme, namely, positions and promotions, addressed the promotional struggle experienced by women in junior teaching positions.

The analysis shows a pattern of the income, qualifications and specific gender ascribed to the roles and positions which are still an integral part of the education system which dictates the growth and development for teachers in education. Decision-making addresses the views and relationships and the roles delegated to both male and female teachers through management activities. The implementation of the decision-making processes addresses the way in which management negotiates and navigates the issues of gender and power within the functionality of the education system. Division of labour addresses the processes and practices used to delegate the responsibilities and activities at a school through the management systems.

I aimed to address the stereotypical issues which appear still to be dominant in the school environment, specifically in relation to divisions of labour and extramural activities. The following three chapters address gender equality and also the current equality practices and process which are implemented.

<div align="center">**Chapter 4**</div>

<div align="center">**12. Gendered positions and professional development**</div>

The theme of positions and professional development discuss the following sub-themes 1) the education system 2) gender and positions in schools and 3) professional development. The chapter aimed to address how males and females are positioned in the education system and also how these positions are reflected in schools. In addition, the chapter focuses on the way in which the professional development of males and females is actualised in respect of the various educational levels.

12.1 Education system

Gender in the education system appears to be a longstanding debate and is well known. However, despite the fact that it was debated in the 20th century, it is clear that both teachers and management are still striving to resolve the issue of ascribing gender roles and female empowerment at various educational levels.

As argued in the literature review, no significant progress has been made in terms of gender equality and gender inequality continues to manifest through the actions and processes at the systemic levels as well as the school levels.

If we consider how gender plays out in positions at the various educational levels in the school, a range of possibilities and stereotypical associations come to mind. The daunting "mother figure", which predicts the possibilities open to the majority of women in society, especially in education, continues to exercise considerable influence in respect of the promotional opportunities and positions of women in education (Morley 2014). Both men and women collaborate in the process of defining and categorising gender in practice, assigning not only different grade levels to either males or females but believing that the process by which they assign these specific roles and positions is fair.

Specific levels and phases in the education system are flagships for gendered terrains. The majority of the teachers in the foundation phases are women and it is only in the high schools that one finds a greater gender democracy (Morley 2014). Women are often assigned to certain phases by default, simply by virtue of the fact that they are female.

The primary school and foundation phases are dominated by women primarily because women, as compared to men, are viewed as more *"nurturing and caring"* and more "*capable and patient*" with the learners in these phases. It is clear that this does not present a gender-equal terrain nor does it support the gender parity statistics of 95.2% gender equality achievement.

The collective ideals of women teaching in certain phases have not ended with the preferred appointment of women to positions in these phases. Both women and men have individualised their positions in each phase to such an extent that this has influenced and dominated the personal and social environments of which men and women dualistically form a part.

For example, Lucy claimed that not only are women more capable in this phase but "*parents feel uncomfortable with male teachers in this phase*". As was explained in Lucy's interview, the influential factors in communities and the social perceptions of genders not only influence the positions to which genders are assigned but also directly dictate the level at which male and female teachers are employed. The contributory factor of parental beliefs in respect of gender is not only visibly demonstrated at the various educational levels but has become intertwined in the processes used to appoint males and females in the different phases. Moreover, the process of positioning genders in the educational phases is biased in its assumptions and also directly dependent on the gendered perceptions and beliefs pertaining to the traditional male and female roles.

Understanding the stigma attached to males teachers at the lower educational levels and also how parents influence the positioning of males at the various educational levels at the school is crucial to understanding gender in the prevailing schooling system. As reflected in the data, the school created a sense of equal standing and status between the genders in relation to positions and educational levels despite the fact that teachers recognise and identify the gendered beliefs in the system which dictate at what levels and in which positions males will be appointed.

The male stigma is, however, based on more on speculation than actual belief with males who teach young learners being viewed as sexual predators instead of educators. Males are thus barred from teaching at the lower levels and prohibited from being appointed in this specific phase due to the gendered roles, perceptions and beliefs prevalent in social and cultural traditions. This, however, is not unaccounted for during gender parity measures and results.

Ironically, Peter explained this phenomenon in a relaxed and natural way, as if it were the correct method of employing and positioning women in the various educational (school) levels to the detriment of the male teachers.

It was thus clear that, by default, he supported the positioning of genders at specific levels and in specific phases and that this was a natural phenomenon for him.

> "*I think they, the woman are, I don't know they are better than the, they work with the children better I don't know I think so.*

The guys don't, the males don't have that much patience. I wouldn't have that much patience to teach in the foundation phase. I think the females have got more patience because they are mothers, so they find it easier."

It would seem that Peter's beliefs were totally opposite to those of Lucy, as Peter appeared to support the notion of gendered perceptions in education and accepted female dominance at the lower educational (school) levels to the neglect of males. As was evident in Peter's interview, it would appear that males tend to believe that women are positioned in the various phases according to their gender because, supposedly, all women are mothers.

I tend to question whether this generalised gender perception is embedded in social or cultural views and perspectives and also that the fact that women are mothers enables them to cope better than men with the learners in the lower grades. The stereotypical ideal of female teachers is demonstrated in the fact that women are employed mainly at the lower levels because they are female and mothers. Males do not have sufficient patience and therefore they are exempted from teaching in the lower grades and are simply not appointed to posts at these levels Lucy's interview suggested that this process prejudices males in the school environment as parents, or rather society, believe the appointment of males at the lower levels to be extremely inappropriate. Therewith it becomes a justification for the appointment of women into lower levels and positions.

As emerged from Joey's interview, the process of assigning and positioning females at the various educational levels tends towards a naturalistic process and is accepted without question or objection. Joey appeared to be a very interesting individual and I felt that she demonstrated a tendency towards feminist ideals and principles. Joey described the appointment of males and females in the specific phases and at the various levels according to their gender and not their abilities, qualifications and preferences.

Joey explained the appointment process in education as follows:

"Because females teach in the foundation phase, I have never met a male teacher that has taught in the foundation phase … Well it depends on the kind of post it is. If it's a, foundation phase post or it's a, in the foundation it's only usually females, so then it's going to be a more female based thing".

It is clearly presumed that females, as a collective, should be appointed mainly in the foundational phase simply because they are female and thus they supposedly demonstrate motherly characteristics. On the other hand, men are exempted from the caring and nurturing roles and this prevents them from being appointed at the lower educational (school) levels.

As seen in Cassy's interview, a few individuals only have perhaps considered how gender is replicated at the various educational (school) levels. As seen in Cassy's case when probed the natural and habituated beliefs about gender surface. It was only when she was questioned that she noted and responded according to the habituated belief of the collective, as well as the gendered roles assigned to males and females. It is within these gendered responses and natural processes of gendering and engendering that gender inequality remains unchallenged. Cassy commented on gender in education.

> *"I never thought about it, mmm, no, I don't actually think so. Maybe in a primary school it's a disadvantage to be a male, especially in the junior primary like Grade 1, 2 and 3 and that. They are definitely not going to hire males* (Cassy)".

It is important to note Cassy's remark that "they are definitely not going to hire males". Why would schools and organisations not employ male teachers at the lower levels if they are qualified and able to perform the tasks required in these phases? Clearly, males are, by default, barred from these levels before they even apply or are considered during the appointment processes.

Sarah was reserved when she tried to explain the phenomenon:

> *"I suppose its safety issues mostly. Parents are concerned about the children's safety so they are uncomfortable with males around with the younger ones and I suppose it makes the males uncomfortable around children as well because the parents don't trust you with the children – then you have to be overly careful and so, with females, there's less of pressure to be that careful around children so we can be more free around children and I don't think males can be that free around children".*

I question why Sarah would claim that is a safety issue or that parents feel uncomfortable with males being with their children. We trust males to educate and inspire learners in high school when they are no longer children. In addition, most teenagers have developed their sense of gender and their roles in social circles. There is clearly evidence of a sexual stigma attached to male teachers in respect of their involvement and intentions with younger, impressionable learners. It is ironic that we tend not to expect the gendered behaviour from female teachers and that they are thus liberated from this process due to the assumed gender roles.

Lucy elaborated passionately on the gender biased assumptions in relation to men teaching at the lower educational levels and canvased for male rights and equal representation at the lower educational levels.

> *"Because I mean, just because you are male, there shouldn't be an immediate assumption that you are a threat to young children. You know you should be given the opportunity, the same opportunity as what women would do. So there is a level of discrimination against them for their gender, gender discrimination which is an issue, females have an issue about it all the time but it's happening a lot in the foundation phase of schools".*

Although I do believe that Lucy was not necessarily advocating for increased numbers of males at the lower educational levels, she may, perhaps, have sought to benefit personally from such an increase. Lucy was a novice teacher, with one year's experience and I valued her concern for male teachers but believed it to be misplaced in the school environment. Lucy explained the male stigma as being a *"threat to younger learners".* The idea of being threating towards younger impressionable learners is based on current educational issues surrounding male teachers and sexual intentions and actions with younger learners.

Jacob, however, seemed to believe that the stigma attached to men in education was linked to a general gender perspective. He explained the stigma in a more personalised manner:

> *"I mean I also don't understand, it's just you know, when I tell some of the people I know I'm a teacher, they're all kind of, you know, a little taken aback. Because you know it kind of, teaching goes along with the nurturing and bringing up of children which is more commonly associated with females, so maybe people instantly make that association, you know it's got to do with kids, it's more a female thing, whereas you think males, you think maybe builders, guys building buildings, and you know work like business places. So I just think there's that, once again that stigma about it, like if you're a teacher, you know, you're either female or you know, you get the odd male, but they work at an all boys' school or a high school, you don't often get the males at a primary school. And it's just because people assume that it's more a female role, and I do not know why".*

It may be that the stigma attached to male teachers and learners has impeded men entering the foundation phase without being questioned because of the misconceptions and misgivings parents may have. Peter's approach to the positioning of males and females in the school environment and at specific levels was less personal and more management orientated.

Peter explained the way in which management influences the appointment processes of males and females in specific positions and educational levels with a hint of dismay: "*Equal opportunity to a position. But, I don't think they like deleting from the post process, they are, just like, favouring.* "*They are selecting, so they are going to favour the female, it's all about stereotyping something.*"

Thus, although it is possible to claim equality, it was clear from Peter's interview that management not only influences the appointment processes but actually manipulates the process to appoint males and females to stereotypical roles and positions at the various educational levels. Therefore, not only does management manipulate and navigate the school landscape through its ability to abuse its power and authority during the appointment process and the positioning of women, but it also upholds gender inequality for both men and women during this process at the various levels and in the different phases of the education system.

It was ironic to note that, although Peter seemed too aware of unfair practices and how unequal the various phases were, he also felt that the system was, somehow, fair. Thus, he displayed the same tendency of most organisations and educational institutions that aim for a collective ideal of the male and female concepts, with this then becoming a standard process of appointing and positioning at the various levels. This, in turn, becomes individualised to the extent that it becomes acceptable practice and, even more so, the collectives of males and females then support and uphold these stereotypical ideals in practices.

When analysing the positions at phase level across the system, it is not only clear that there is a preference for appointing and positioning either males or females in certain phases but gender will navigate positional opportunities. At the secondary school level the reverse is seems to occur, with male teachers being preferred at this level because of their *"discipline and authority and control of schools and learners at this ages"*.

Cassy explained the preferences at the both primary and secondary school levels as follows:

> *"I personally think that they should because it's a good father figure in the children, in high schools I think it switches the other way around, they prefer male to female in high school because I think they think males control better, have stronger authority over kids, and maybe that's the same reasons they, they don't hire them for primary school."*

Thus, the preference for male teachers at the secondary school level is related to the perceptions of male authority, leadership and control, despite the predominance of female teachers in most schools. Although Cassy's view of male role models in educational environments is important, the fact is that, at the time of the study, men were in the minority in all educational environments. Despite the fact that this is true, it should not be facilitated by the regression of equality purposes and outcomes.

Gender equality initiatives and social transformation challenge both social and cultural roles and the stereotypes associated with the genders. However, the process in which gender equality is actualised in the school environment, has regrettably failed to notice the widespread gender segregation at the various educational levels and in the different educational phases.

Accordingly, the way in which the perceptions in respect of males and females are embedded and vested in positions, in the appointment process at specific educational (school) levels, and in specific educational phases, should be explored in order to understand how gender is actualised not only at the different educational (school) levels but also in the positions of each level.

12.2 Gender and positions

The process by which genders are positioned in educational environments is supposed to be fair and equitable, as is stipulated in the appointment guidelines and policies. Although the study participants believed that due process was followed and implemented during the appointment process, there was nevertheless clearly still an element of gendered processes and preferences. The appointment of a specific gender to a particular position and also in the methods used to navigate gender in educational environments in terms of positions.

Peter explained the appointment process at the school, with specific reference to the process deployed to allocate and teachers as well as genders:

> *"Well, mainly, sometimes, they usually when the staff meetings, they will tell us that there is a positon available that we must go and apply, mostly we just go look on the website and they tell us to look on the website, but the most thing I have seen here is that when a teacher leaves they, they always ask the staff, there is a position open, does your friend want to come and teach here and I think that is the wrong way of going, by getting good teachers at our school because they usually come and they are not even like.."*

Schools and organisations may advertise posts in this manner although formal methods such as advertising in e.g. newspapers, departmental circulars, are used as well. If not it borders on unfair practice but due process during the appointment process is also ignored – a direct violation of policy. Ironically, Peter, who was in a managerial position, had the authority to address the appointment process. Peter acknowledged that the process being used was unfair and was not in line with the appointment regulations but failed to address this in practice. As formal methods of advertising the positions was neglected, and the best candidate for the position was not selected. Ironically, Peter was the only member of management willing to share this with me as the other management members maintained that due process was followed during appointments. I tend to question the way in which personnel were appointed at the school, and the promotion processes that were used to allocate positions to management and staff members.

An equal opportunity to be appointed to a specific position for both males and females was being lost through the practice of inviting friends to work at the school. The female management participant, Betty, seemed to be unaware of male and female perceptions of positions. Betty claimed that gender no longer influenced positions: *"I think in the older days, yes, but not anymore."* Thus, Betty appeared to believe that gender was an old debate which no longer dictated and informed social perceptions and beliefs. Ironically Betty seemed to be unaware of how lower ranking individuals perceived gender, therefore ceasing to address gender issue adequately in practice. Betty seemed convinced that all, in practice, staff members experienced gender equity and equality. However, Betty was inconsistent during her interview when she stated "because *it's natural in our country that the male is the leader".*

Thus, Betty believed, that her position was unnatural and also that male authority was automatically accepted. Betty was paradoxical, in relation to her statement that gender was irrelevant in education but appeared to support the notion of male authority, thereby indicating a preference for the appointments of males in authoritarian positions. Thus, as a member of management, Betty clearly failed to recognise gender issues in schools as well as the need for fair, equitable appointment processes. Betty herself demonstrated a gender blind approach to the school environment. She did believe that school practices had changed, but failed to realise how and why.

School practices have shifted from a human-centred approach which considers the equity needs of the individual to a numerical representation of what education should be. Although changes in the school environment have brought about opportunities for both male and female teachers, gender inequality is still embedded in the functionality of the school environment, as seen in Betty's claims of equality and women. Betty reverted on her previous statements as she half-heartedly explained equality for women; *"because they see what the uh women can do" and they are strong" and they are good leaders and that they can, take the responsibility".*

I question Betty's professional and cultural awareness as to whom she was referring in her comment that "*they can see what the women can do*". The question of the "who" is quite important because, in a working environment, Betty was able to recognise what women are capable of doing. She should, in any case, have been able to see what women are capable of doing as she was in a position of authority and power. The concept which underpins Betty's assumption is based on the visible confirmation of equality between men and women.

Betty also mentioned that she would "*prefer to appoint more men"* than women due to the low ratio of men to women in education. This preference for the appointment of males and the positions to which they are appointed is not only situated in male management but also in female management.

Not only do female management members then participate in the ideal of males in education but they will also attempt to rectify the numbers, based on their preferences for employment in specific positions.

Thus, the appointment of teachers to positions may seem a gender equal and equitable process which consists of due process and a fair appointment process but, in practice, these processes are manipulated and navigated to encourage equality through the representation of numbers in accordance with gender parity rather than gender equality and equity (Bailey & Holmarsdottir 2015).ca

It is clear from the processes used to appoint men and women that there are certain relationships between and perceptions of position and gender. These relationships are navigated according to the boundaries established through the cultural and social traditions in the school environment and between management and the lower ranking positions. On the other hand, the perceptions directly determine the potential positions to which males and females can be progressed and to which they can be appointed. Gender perceptions navigate the school environment through the expected notions of male and female identities.

These identities help to determine the processes and practices for the purpose of control and coordination in a working environment. However, I did not expect to find, within these relationships and perceptions, an internalised process in which males and females collaborated to maintain the gender roles which support gendered positions. Neither did I expect or understand the reasons why most teachers had internalised the latter process to explain gender unequal preferences in the working environment. I must admit that I do understand that the shortage of male teachers in education will, in effect, result in a greater need to appoint males as compared to females, but I do not understand why they are promoted over females. It was clear that the participants had internalised the processes in practices to the extent that they no longer believed that gender was the reason for progression. This was despite the fact that they understood that gender equality had created an environment suited to gender bias preferences during the appointments and positioning of the genders.

Vicky explained how male preference and gender perceptions had become relevant in the school environment:

> *"With boys, you need a male teacher especially in a high school. You need male teachers because I don't think women, in certain cultures, have the same, seniority or understanding in, in certain cultures. You know, you can be very strict and you can do — have a good routine in your class, in certain cultures, you know. In high school I, I had the experience whereby the, especially the boys they do not take you seriously.*

And if you just make a joke or whatever they think "oh well now the whole class can go" and well when there's a male teacher, they tend to listen more. So, I do believe we do need males in the, the system. More for the fact that, boys need a role models and, in our schools."

As was evident in Vicky's interview, in certain cultural traditions women and men do not share equal authority or seniority. This, then, is replicated in the school environment in the positions of males and females. Vicky also explained how these traditions manifested in classroom practices. She clearly demonstrated in her personal view the greater authority of males versus that of females. Thus, culture has become intertwined in both teaching positions and classroom practices where gender dictates behaviour and process.

In order to understand how traditions have manifested in school practices, it is essential to understand that the school is intertwined with social domains and the predetermined perceptions of male and females in the community. A school must operate in accordance with the community's accepted standards and preferences in respect of the positions of males and females. Thus, the positions of males and females are arranged and aligned with those of the community's beliefs and culturally accepted norms and then become standard educational practice.

With regard to current policy reform, with specific reference to the Gender Equality Policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014), I question how the Department of Basic Education intends to rectify this phenomenon of gender inequality in practice. I also question the way it intends to adjust the 50% workforce division in the apparent absence of male teachers and in light of the fact that although there is a grave difference in the ratio of male to female teachers, men continue to be promoted before women. In light of this assertion what do the gender parity statistics then actually measure?

According to the gender parity statistics at the time of the study, 95.5% of gender equality has been achieved. This may at first glance be accepted but I wonder whether this result is based on the progression of females, which is clearly being nullified by the limited higher positions, uninformed teachers who do not merit promotion or the fact that, according to the participants, in the teaching profession men are outnumbered by women.

If I consider the various possibilities, then a new perspective should be considered to explain this phenomenon in practice. When the participants were asked to elaborate on and explain this phenomenon, the role of cultural influences and socially assigned positions for both men and women became evident.

The participants ascribed this phenomenon to the old and still relevant roles of women, particularly in South Africa. Jill quite naturally explained that "*women are more caring and nurturing … teaching goes along with nurturing and bringing up of children which is more commonly associated with females".*

This is thus clearly the crux of the matter. Yes, women may be more caring and nurturing than men but this does this mean that they are incapable of performing the same tasks? As a matter of fact, when questioned on whether this was a social or cultural role and whether this may prove true in practice, the participants disagreed.

The participants expressed a variety of opinions on this issue with some noting that it was due to "*favouritism it all depends on who's at the top*" while others believed that *"this is the way this has been, since forever"* and men had greater "*social standing, men had more authority" and tended to be in positions of power and were assigned positions of discipline".* It was, thus, clear that the perceptions of males and females are explicitly known, communicated and shared in the school environment. It is ironic that these perceptions are not questioned or debated but instead are used as reason for justifying gendered positions and the processes of inequality.

I acknowledge that we are perhaps incapable of being ungendered in our ways and thus gender will always remain a debateable topic. However, my problem is that we appear not to think about or consider as we seem to have been culturally and socially programmed to accept our genders in relation to one another. The participants explained this as this is how "*it's been since forever".* We clearly explain and support gender inequality internally, ceasing to eliminate our gender perceptions.

How do we then restore balance in education? It is not possible just to start promoting women instead of men in the face of the need schools have for male appointments for the purposes of control and hierarchy. In other words, it is not possible to restore balance in order to create gender equality in a socially biased culture and system of gender understanding.

As seen in Thembi's interview, the tendency to promote males ahead of females is more evident in rural communities due to the fact that in "*society, he is already seen as the head".* In addition, if a woman candidate with more experience and qualifications opposes the appointment of males "*they would say she's got family and you know she could be committed to that" and "she's emotional and will not be able to make rational decisions".*

Ironically, it would seem that women tend not to attribute their own lack of promotion and the rapid promotion of men to gender but rather they appear to see it is a natural process as men are *"leaders, authoritarian and controlling*" and "*it's a stigma or stereotype thing".*

Thembi further explained that in *"rural communities they look towards a man to control a school and that he is not emotional".* I wonder if this tendency, as described by the participant, is in reality a cultural tendency or rather a positional gendered association. However, I do believe further investigation and exploration is needed to understand this phenomenon in rural communities.

Thembi's interview clearly illustrated the gender perceptions in the school environment which conflict with the initiatives of gender equity and equality that have been outlined. Thembi clearly illustrated the how she, as a female, rejected the perception of male management and leadership. I would describe Thembi as an empowered female with a need to be organisationally empowered through positions and possibly promotion.

Thembi stated as follows:

> *"In the education system from what I have seen I don't think so. I mean I'm just thinking about other situations and other schools that I've heard about as well so I don't even know how true but I don't think so. I think that sometimes you know a man will still have that, they will always try to maybe look at the man as he can control the school better because he's a man and I don't know from where that comes from really because just being a male on its own doesn't necessarily mean that he can run the school, so I don't think so because maybe some. I mean other schools that I know of from rural areas especially, they usually have a principal who is male and you know when I listen to the reasoning behind and I find out the background of that principal, it's you know he's a man and he will control the school and he's not emotional, so that's usually you know the response, he's not emotional."*

Thembi's interview illustrated that social and cultural beliefs about gender and position are still valid. However, Thembi questioned these gendered ideals, social and cultural beliefs that still determine and influence the positional statuses of males and females. As indicated by Thembi, women are associated with being emotional and, therefore, unable to command positions of authority. Whereas the sexist assumptions assume that men cannot be emotional. These perceptions of males and females not only translate directly from historical cultural beliefs about male dominance but are practised as a modern principle. Despite the fact that gender equality and equity initiatives have aimed at challenging these social and cultural roles, very little appears to have changed.

The Gender Equality and Equity Empowerment Act (36 of 1996) states that unequal social and cultural beliefs should be eliminated in the interests of female progress in all spheres of life.

In addition, the Gender Equality and Equity Policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014) stipulates all spheres in the educational environment should eliminate social and cultural stereotypes of males and females to enable equal and equitable practices and processes to become entrenched in school environment.

Thus, the collaborative efforts to empower women through policies has been subjugated in respect of the levels and positions in education through the cultural and social beliefs vested in the system itself.

Abigail believed that positions were stereotypical and thus positons were, in themselves, gendered, resulting in specific positons for males and females. Abigail stated that "*I suppose it's just that stereotypical idea that that's where men are and then women have their place. I don't necessarily agree with that but, I tend to associate those sort of roles, – that's what comes into my mind when I think male and women. It's terrible".*

Abigail believed in the conventional positions of gender but also acknowledged that it was "terrible", thus demonstrating that socially she has been encouraged to believe in these stereotypes of men and women although she was aware of how unconventional it was. Similarly, Abigail described the tendency of females to believe and enact gender according to the socially and culturally described perceptions of gender identities.

Thembi's statements were embedded in the cultural ideals of males and females in education as well as in society. Thembi also explained that men will always be promoted into positions of power.

> *"Like usually like I said they would usually be probably given a more advantage like if it was an interview maybe and they looking for a principal and I'm just thinking a rural area again that context, most times employ the man to be the principal because already in society he is seen as the head and everyone really agrees in society in that context that well why not, if he will be the best candidate because a women as well they will always be like well she's got family and you know she could be committed to that, and she's emotional and she won't be able to make rational decisions because she's emotional and emotional being.".*

How do emotional characteristics influence positions? While not arguing the collective method in terms of which these attributes are assigned to females in general, I do have to argue that not all women are emotionally inclined in a working environment nor do they demonstrate emotional tendencies in a working environment? Nevertheless, the ideal exists that men, by default, assume a non-emotional stance and thus they have a professional advantage.

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I do believe these associated emotional attributes are of less value in modern culture as various personality types, preferred genders and professional cultures currently dictate behaviour in a working environment.

Clearly our cultural and social associations have not only remained gendered but have become the integrated method of positioning personnel in education according to a collective ideal of both men and women. Ironically, the ideal of the women as family orientated and committed to these family responsibilities does not resemble the ideals and aspirations of all women in education. Women want promotion and are ensuring that they have the required qualifications for promotion. Sadly, however, there is nowhere to go in a stagnant system.

It is thus essential that professional development in the school environment is explored to understand the way in which gender is replicated in the promotional process and how the school environment enables the professional development of the genders in terms of the various positions and educational levels.

12.3 Professional development

Promotion at the school is based on two known principles, namely, qualifications and years of experience. However, in the school environment, at the time of the study, there have been no promotions in the previous four years. When addressing the issue of promotions in the school environment it is crucial to understand the perceptions that determine positions and promotions in this environment.

Perceptions which are vested in the social and cultural dimensions of society inherently dictate gender restrictions, as well as gender perceptions and identities. Male and female individuals govern and navigate their professional progression in accordance with perceived expectations as well as the perceived positions of males and females. The data reflected conflicting arguments, with the participants expressing two concrete notions of promotion in their specific schools. The participants were either convinced that promotions in the education were based on teaching experience and qualifications or promotions were being restricted due to a stagnant system. It became clear in these concrete notions of promotions that gender manifested in both the process and the practices of how males and females were promoted.

The female participants, more so than the men, believed that it was fair to promote males ahead of females as this is a natural selection process which is socially and culturally embedded in our understanding of the male and female genders. In addition to the socially embedded perceptions of the positions which males and females should hold there are also perceptions established in the schools that encourage women to believe that, promotion wise, males are preferred due to the shortage of men in education.

The gender perceptions were further entrenched by encouraging women to believe that more males should be appointed in order to achieve a gender equal status in schools.

The question arises as to the reason for the need for males in education and how this perception of the need for male educators is sustained? The perception created in the schools encourages gender restrictions and gendered promotional processes while the perceptions in respect of men in education are linked to numbers and the male stereotypes of authority and power. Socially, the perceptions in relation to males are linked to ideals of higher positions with higher remuneration. Men are socially assigned the role of the dominant, authoritarian leader in most traditional households and religious beliefs and, hence, the perceptions of males and their ability to lead, govern and control have been embedded in the envisaged organisational management structures in education.

Promotions will thus be in line with these perceptions in encouraging and navigating gender at a school. The data reflected that both genders believed that males were promoted more quickly than females because of the numbers of male teachers declining compared to females. Both genders appeared to perceive this as fair and equitable.

The perceptions of genders are further encouraged by the fact that the majority of employees at the school are female. Thus, the need for males is evident only because of the predominantly female workforce in the school environment. The need for females to be promoted may arise from a comparison between the number of management members who are male and the number who are female which, in turn, results in the same gender equation and the need for true equity and equality at secondary school level.

Generally speaking, positions in the education system are limited due to the age of staff members, with schools having limited positions to which they may promote personnel. Despite the Gender Equality Policy which states that the promotion of women to higher positions should be equal to that of men and also that a 50% workforce division should be achieved. In practice, however, there are few or no promotional possibilities or positions available. As was seen in Micky's interview, the progression and promotion of females are not only being subjugated by preference for males but the practicality of promotions in schools is becoming questionable. Micky explained that, in the four years she had been working at the school "*no one has been promoted, I am not sure how that usually works".*

The fact that promotional opportunities are not available in a fairly restricted system indicates that policy is not aligned with practice. In addition, the collective ideal of a standardised education system with equal positions and opportunities, which has been created and upheld by parity statistics, has encourage disconnect between the idealised goals in respect of female promotion and possibilities in education.

It was unexpected to find that the majority of the teachers believed that promotion would come from qualifications and years of experience.

It was thus ironic that most of the female teachers, who had qualifications beyond their first degrees and who had been employed for much longer than eight years, believed that the promotion processes were gendered and preference based. Not only did they believe that the process was engendered but they had been exhausted by the promotion process itself. Their comments highlighted the struggle for promotion as well as the failure of the education system to provide opportunities for promotion and financial rewards for the work carried out at the schools.

Vicky's interview provided evidence of the conflict between progression and promotion and school practices. Although this may be true, one participant felt that she was not being denied promotion due to gender but that the education system enforced the stagnation of female teachers as the positions for promotions are limited. Vicky passionately explained how qualifications and years of experience conflict with promotion opportunities.

> *"And, and I don't think that the department. You know even if you think about it, two or three of our teachers here they've got, honours or whatever, they do not get a better salary or nothing. They like, what do you call it? Phase one teachers". If the department can just get a different, system of promoting people, not only because of their qualifications or the fact that they've worked for twenty years. Because I, can tell you that a lot of teachers do get demotivated by, with the fact that they put everything in and the only way you can literally get, financial gain from, from education is when you do extra other work."*

It was clear that Vicky believed that, although a teacher might be qualified and/or competent and have the years of experience required for promotion, the system was unable to recognise these teachers and they were either not being promoted or they were stagnating in their working environment. The lack of adequate remuneration and reward for work done or for qualifications were serving to demotivate teachers. The fact that women were not being promoted and were therefore not being financially rewarded for either their qualification or their years of experience was resulting in a paradox in the schools. Teachers are encouraged to qualify themselves for the purpose of increased remuneration as well as take extramural activities outside of their contractual duty but were not being rewarded. The teachers who were stagnating at the lower levels were becoming demotivated by the process of qualifying and applying for promotion but not receiving any financial reward due to either their gender of the fact that they were under- or overqualified.

A minimum number of educators equip themselves with extra qualifications after their first degrees in view of the fact that qualifications no longer mean increased remuneration or promotion. Thus, the education sector is ceasing to ensure lifelong learning as well as increased knowledge, even though this would benefit learners in the school environment.

The individual female teacher or for that matter male teacher, have become submerged in the collective, institutionalised processes of policies to the extent that their equity needs are ignored in the interests of the broader population.

The question thus arises as to why qualifications do not appear to translate into progress into management positions. As argued, perceptions shape the school environment in accordance with social and cultural roles and gender expectations.

Hence, the perceptions also shape the way promotions should be implemented and practised at the school, with these practices being embedded in the prevailing traditional views and customs in the school environment. It is for this reason that promotions are not based on qualifications or years of experience but on the expected performance differences between the genders.

As a result, the education system is stagnating or shrinking where promotion is concerned. When a young educator enters the education system there is no potential for that individual to grow professionally. Similarly, the perceptions of the individual, male or female, will determine whether they aspire to be promoted, for example if the individual believes that men should be promoted ahead of women is the natural order as based on their personal understanding of gender.

The individualised perceptions of males and females are not just demonstrated in their personal goals and aims but also in their professional identities. Professional identities are shaped by personal environment as well as exposure to risk factors in the professional environment. Some of the participants mentioned that both male and female teachers had rejected promotional opportunities as they felt safe and comfortable in their current posts.

In his interview, Mark explained that he believed that progress and promotions was twofold. He maintained that staff members should develop themselves for the purpose of promotion as this would mean they would receive promotional opportunities to a higher teaching grade and more senior responsibilities. Mark explained how males, in particular, view the school environment:

> *"There are men that, that I have just described that have the qualities but they are more into sports and that side of our sector and I think it's a little bit more academically and administratively challenging for most males, and I think really if also talk to fellow peers.*

I get so frustrated of what drives them, what's their passion for being in the education sector and why they would like to leave the education is mostly because of salary and not getting promotional opportunities and why is that? It's because they don't develop themselves as much. "

Females also and then they get frustrated of being in a specific post for too long or getting a better opportunity. It is not always leaving the sector because of a negative aspect but males are heavily underrepresented in our school."

As suggested by Mark in his interview, if male teachers would develop themselves they would be promoted. But, does personal development really result in promotion and progress in the school environment. Mark also mentioned during the interview that men leave the profession as a result of the low salary and lack of promotion. This may, in fact, be why the educational sector is experiencing a decline in the number of male teachers compared to female teachers. When addressing this decline of males in education it is crucial to understand the perceptions vested in being a teacher as well as the perceptions of teaching positions. The perceptions of positions automatically govern gendered relations to ensure that these perceptions are upheld in practice. As was evident in the data, the females believed that males are promoted faster than they are. They described this as natural in view of schools' perceptions and male teachers' progress abilities.

When comparing Mark's views with those of Vicky it is fascinating to understand how males and females view promotion. Mark claimed that men should qualify themselves for promotion while Vicky felt that qualifications did not automatically mean promotion for females. It is ironic that men are promoted and progressed faster than females although they often lack qualifications in comparison to their female counterparts.

As was illustrated in Vicky's interview, qualifications and promotions do not necessarily go hand in hand, especially for women. Vicky explained disappointedly that "*female teachers are qualified for their masters but they are still employed as phase 1 teachers, they, only get more money for the years worked, the people say, for example, we've got three HODS and these people will stay till the day they die*".

Nevertheless, I do find that self-development is of crucial importance although I have also experienced that, in the educational environment, qualifications may actually count against you when applying for promotion. The majority of educational institutions claim that you are overqualified and thus not eligible for the position or that the male candidate with fewer qualifications seems to be more deserving of promotion. Consequently, I do believe self-development is for personal and not professional gain, as qualifications may result in regression or stagnation instead of promotion.

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As was seen in Vicky's interview, men are often preferred for promotion as a result of the roles and characteristics ascribed to females in the school environment in terms of which the perceptions of motherhood and emotional qualities overshadow their ability to progress.

> *"Yes, I do think that males do get preference because I think, women are mostly emotionally attached to things and, maybe also personality type. But, I think a lot of times they do think that women can't do the job or is too emotional to do a managerial post, yes."*

Thus, gender stereotypes as well as the perceptions of female teachers result in their not being given promotion and progressing. However, it also seemed that Vicky was against female management and progression and instead favoured male leadership. On the other hand, Abigail's view conflicted with that of Vicky as she stated that, compared to men, women are more inclined to exhibit a greater work commitment and higher ethics. *"Women are more willing to work and are more productive then most men"* in the education system.

The perceptions of female teachers are guided in accordance with the fact that the majority of managerial and promoted positions are of an administrative nature whereas, generally speaking, men are promoted into positions of higher remuneration, authority and power (Morley 2014, Karlsson 2010). Joy's perceptions of males and females were based directly on the perceptions and stereotypes of the differences between the genders and thus the preferences demonstrated by the two genders.

> *"I don't know. I think maybe there's a not necessarily stigma but I think the sort of status in teaching is not quite that appealing, I think maybe too many men and then of course there is also the earning potential which is there and that would deter I think maybe a lot of breadwinners."*

The status of teaching as a profession is grounded in the perception of the educational environment. According to Shirazi (2016), education has become synonymous with females, with a decline in the number of male teachers in lower positions and promotions increasing the number of males in managerial positions. Similarly, there is a tendency in modern society to "frown upon" the notion of men becoming teachers.

In contrast to Joy, Jacob described males in education as unique owing to the societal perceptions and stereotypes associated with the genders.

> *"I feel in general males probably do get preferential, they will get preference over females, and I don't know why, it's just the- it's just the society we're living in where males usually get offered stuff before females, from what I've seen and you read in news articles and stuff.*

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It's always males get it or males and females and females in the exact same job position but males are earning higher. So I feel that because of how it's been happening for so many years that companies or people just, they prefer maybe to promote a male over a female, and that's just how it's been happening."

As described by Jacob, it would appear that societal traditions in respect of the genders have not yet been challenged in relation to the perceptions of males and females in organisational structures and the school environment. Furthermore, these perceptions of males as the dominant gender and therefore as deserving of more remuneration and higher positions, have an adverse impact on female empowerment and equality purposes in education. The fact that Jacob described this process as "*happening for many years*" establishes that not only has gender equality in terms of promotion and position failed to be challenged and changed but it has also become an ongoing process which is replicated from generation to generation.

It is thus clear that gender inequality has not yet been adequately addressed in the methods, habits and processes used at the school level to enable the progression and promotion of female teachers. Accordingly, I question exactly what the parity statistics are addressing as it would seem that the issues of gender, perceptions and promotions have not been analysed or even noted in the official documentation.

It was ironic that the data reflected a very interesting finding, namely, that the participants were unsure or unaware of the way in which promotion is actually realised in practice. It emerged that the process of promotions and positions was perceived as unclear by some participant. However, I also observed that, although they believed the process to be fair to an extent, they had formulated reasons to support unequal and inequitable promotional processes.

It was interesting to note that the male participants believed that promotion was based on different approaches to those of the female participants.

The male teachers and members of management appeared to believe that the promotion process was fair in terms of equal rights although they acknowledged differences between the genders in relation to promotion. Participants in general had three distinct reasons;

"There is a great need for male teachers in education" and *males in general approached promotions differently than women, males have a stereotypical role in the education system."*

Thus, not only did the males believe the latter was a form of equality but believed that the approach genders take advantages males over females in the school environment.

Although I believe that male and females have different approaches in respect of position, the females appeared to be less inclined than the males to communicate their need for promotion.

So, why the difference? It may be that the approaches taken by females stem from their positions and that, as compared to men, women would not ask for promotion due to their lower authority and power in the school environment.

Thus, the promotion process disempowers women while also perpetuating the ideal of equality in the practices. For example, in her interview Cassy explained that her beliefs were centred on gender as well as the schools' preferences found at the secondary school level. Cassy explained with a fair amount of sarcasm while also laughing: *"No. Males are always promoted before females."*

When questioned as to how or why Cassy explained, while laughing loudly, that:

> *"Why, I don't know why, maybe because there is a slight fear that males will leave quicker than females if they don't get what they feel is their due. A female will sit in a job for a very long time, grateful that she has the job …*
>
> *While the male if he is not paid enough or if he is not promoted fast enough will leave. And so, with that in the back of your mind, I feel men tend to get the best positions first … Gender does influence, it does, even if you just have a male teacher, they tend to be slightly more higher paid, slightly more respected, that everyone panders to a male more so than to a female."*

In line with the general perceptions of males in society, males are usually assigned the responsibility of being "breadwinners" in traditional family structures and they become resigned to the responsibilities of caring financially for the family. As a result, males aspire to positions of higher value and remuneration than females. In addition, the perception of the male as the financial caretaker becomes a promotional advantage.

Contrary to females, males are promoted more quickly into positions of authority and power for the purpose to maintain the prevailing gendered perceptions. Thus, men who are not promoted into ideal gendered positons with commensurate financial rewards, often leave education in search of a career which meets the social expectations of traditional communities.

On the other hand, what happens to single mothers, who are women, and who have qualifications and who have been employed for a number of years and, yet, have not been promoted due to the education system structure? Where do single mothers fit into the process and practices, with males being declared the main "breadwinners"*?*

What happens to these women who have no second income and are not remunerated for the hours they spend at their jobs and who are qualified or receive an opportunity to earn more through positional progress? Vicky had the following to say in this regard: *"[T]hey are actually pushing women to get married or to live with somebody, because we can't live by ourselves."*

This situation does not represent an equal system nor does it represent equitable or equal opportunities for both males and females. Annually men in South Africa earn 34% more than women (GAP 2016). We may strive for equal positions and promotions but we are not able to strive for equal incomes. Thus, I question whether being a woman, mother and nurturer, as described, results in their being impoverished and earning less than males?

It may well be that we should consider the female mothering image as both a collective ideal and a violation of the rights of single mothers who fail to provide for their families and who are not promoted because of their family responsibilities.

If we are to explore the reasoning behind gendered appointments and promotions it is essential that we understand what differences lie within the progressional abilities of men and women. According to the Jacob; "*men are more vocal about their aim to be promoted*" whereas "*women will stay in their positions for far longer, only being thankful for the fact that they have a job*".

Although the number of male teachers has declined, it is not possible to say the same about managerial post or positions, as was evident in the interviews conducted with Vicky, Cassy and Sarah. Some of the participants had rather displayed something quite unique – presumed equality. Jacob described the promotion of males and females as fair and equal although he did acknowledge the differences between males and females in the promotional processes.

> *"In terms of promotions and stuff, I think it would be based on performance. I don't think it's, you know, you've been … you're a male teacher, let's get you higher, you're a female teacher who's been here for X amount of years, let's you know, give it to you. I think it's based on performance and a lot of those things. I don't think they'll promote me just because I'm a male teacher. Phew, you're putting me in a spot! I don't … I think males are maybe more outward about it, whereas maybe females just don't feel comfortable going oh you know, I work hard, give me a promotion, whereas some males, you know, just because we have this stigma and thing about us, we might …"*

For Jacob, promotion is based on performance. However, I question how performance is measured and what it is based upon. Is it based on the academic performance of the learners or a teacher's professional performance? Jacob was also a sports manager and thus, did his performance depend on the school's sporting performance?

In terms of the differences in the way in which the genders approach promotion, males tend to be more aggressive about voicing their need for promotion whereas females tend to approach promotion in a more diplomatic way. Females often consult with others before deciding on how the worthwhile their need to be promoted is.

Although Jacob indicated that he felt the promotion process to be fair he also admitted rather shyly that there was a stigma attached to men in education. Jacob explained this male stigma as follows:

> "Well, not stigma really, but I don't know, I just feel like we might be more, like verbal about it. I don't know, I feel males are quite … sometimes, I'm generalising quite a lot, so we speak our minds sometimes, whereas I feel sometimes females might approach other people first or try and work different ways around it. I don't know, there's very few male teachers, in bigger high schools and all male schools there are a few male teachers, but I don't know there's this thing I feel about male teachers is, you're a big physical presence at the school, you're the boss, you're the shouty one.

> And that maybe carries across to all aspects of your work, so not only when it comes to the kids are you the loud and bossy one, but maybe when it comes to other aspects in your work experience or in the work field, that you might do it in other situations such as asking for promotions or …"

Thus, Jacob's interview illustrated the preferred gender bias concept of men, with men supposedly being "the boss" in all spheres of life. Therefore, their authority and power emanate from the fact that they are male, regardless of their positions and, hence, the support for male dominance in the management systems at secondary school. In other words, authority and power are not vested in positions but arise from the perceptions of the male gender.

While men and women realise that there is a grave difference between the progress of male and female teachers they also have personalised the reasons for these differences. The differences are defended in terms of numerical representation as well as gender. Gender and numbers are used to support inequality at secondary schools by explaining such inequality in light of declining male numbers and the supposed female dominance that amounts to female superiority.

However, does the predominance of females truly reflect dominance in the school environment or gender preferences? Jacob's interview confirmed the ideals bestowed on women but also how these ideals would manifest in promotions:

> "So they believe males maybe prefer to work longer or they work harder than females, or that females should be the ones that are at home to look after the kids or whatever.

So once again there's a stigma around women that maybe you know they should work less hours or shouldn't work as hard because men are the breadwinners in the household. So they prefer to give it to men. I don't know how to describe."

It would thus appear that the perceptions of the male and female genders in education have been manipulated and embedded in the promotion process for the purpose of maintaining gendered beliefs and relationships.

The perceptions upheld in the school environment are dependent on two basic beliefs, namely, that males are naturally assigned authority and power and it is only natural that they are promoted and placed in positions above and before women.

Women, on the other hand, are perceived as motherly caretakers who would rather choose their family responsibilities than take on the increased responsibilities and workload typical of managerial positions. Thus, both genders cooperate in the establishment, functioning and perpetuation of these perceptions though habituated practices and gendered relationships.

The collective ideal of women and men become mechanisms of control in a school as both the female and male genders are seen as a collective population and not an individual communities with different organisational needs. As a result, the processes and practices in respect of gendered promotions become an institutionalised ideal which sustains inequality in the educational structures. Accordingly, individuals in the environment are habituated into existing gender perceptions thereby supporting and sustaining unequal practices, even in the personal domain. The majority of the participants appeared to believe that these process and practices are fair.

In light of the latter argument, males and females are promoted based on the idealistic notion of their being equal and, presumably, they share in equitable processes and practices. Thus, the misconception of equality is maintained and continuously practised, thus becoming a habituated process. Males and females share in the collective ideals of ascribing roles and positions because this seems to be both natural and culturally correct. Thus, gender relationships are not challenged but rather reinforced by managerial power structures and embedded in gender relationships and perceptions.

Therefore, an understanding of how management and leadership navigate gender in both the lower ranking positions and managerial positions becomes of crucial importance.

The male participants believed they were promoted into high positions more quickly than females for a variety of reasons: "*Males get promoted more easily in some cultures*";

"*There is a slight fear that male would leave quicker than females if they did get what they feel is their due*", "*males tend to get the best positions first*", there is a preference to appoint males first, due to females being emotionally attached".

How does being thankful for employment result in stagnation and vocal declarations of aims and personal goals demand progression? I question how this truly reflects a gender equal education system as is supported and claimed by the gender parity results? It may be that the stigma surrounding men in education inhibits gendered appointments at certain educational levels and the need for promotional appointments at other levels.

Thus, gender becomes a negotiated and manipulated element in schools. It manifests in preferential appointments, it is used to navigate positions and promotions and it is used to collectively quantity the needs and expectations of teachers in employment. Thus, gender has become a process of distinguishing between men and women for the purpose of attaining and achieving intended status and presumed gender equality and to satisfy social and cultural demands as well as parity statistics.

It is incongruous to note that the opinions of the male teachers conflicted with the opinions of most of the women, with the male participants stating that *"they believe everyone to be equal and have equal rights and equal standing at the school"*.

The same male participants noted that their gender was not really important but that "*Schools have a tendency towards favouritism, in which either males or females are favoured*" and "*schools and are trying to give every one equal opportunities, but there is still that thing of the man is the one who can do certain things and the women is the one who can do certain things*".

Are schools and organisations selecting the ideal candidates by "*favouring*" one gender or are promotional opportunities due to "*the stereotypes*" associated with the genders. What is the difference, then, between "*what women can do and what men can do*"? As argued above, women are perceived as the mothering ideal. Is this what is meant by *"what women can do?" while* men automatically assume leadership and management positions by default? I not only question why women so willingly participate in their own undermining but assume these roles naturally while men demand authority.

12.4 Conclusion

How does gender manifest in promotions? Firstly, I have established that women are not progressing as advocated in the majority of gender awareness campaigns due to the limited number of males in education, promotion preferences, a cultural bias which dictates the progress of and positions assigned to men and women, qualifications, years of experience and positions and women idealised as mothers with patience and nurturing abilities.

I argued that not only does this victimise women and single mothers but it also violates the notion of an equal system as males are also neglected and restricted in relation to the educational phases in which they may practice and participate.

Thus, there is a paradox in education or, more specifically, in this particular school. The staff members are convinced that gender determines social and cultural standing and that this, in turn, influences their positions, but at the same time progression hinges on qualifications. However, the stagnation and bottleneck effect created in schools inhibits progress, thus negating qualifications and relying on both gender and the management systems.

I may be criticised for attempting to explore and understand an age-old debate. However, it would appear that gender equality is a mythical ideal which has been created to enhance awareness of the purpose to appease most female employees. Thus, how do we then progress from the stagnant systems and engendered appointment process to a inaccurate future of female based education? It may be that the solution lies in the need to increase the number of males in education, thereby ensuring that the school environment becomes an actual degendered environment with a 50% workforce division in which qualifications determine progress and there is no need to address the lack of equality and gender parity.

Even if one allows for the various stigmatised ideals surrounding women in education, women are not innocent actors in their roles, positions and promotions processes. Women are ceasing to challenge the institutionalised ideals of women being caring, nurturing and patient, and women are assisting in in the construction of these ideals. On the other hand, men are not only discriminated against, but were becoming a minority in education but those left in the education system perpetuate the collective ideals of power, authority and control and, hence, the stereotypical ideals are seated in position and gender.

Thus, the need to understand the way in which the members of management are orientated and inclined to manage these relationships in practice arises. In addition, there is a need to understand how the process of decision-making, control and coordination dictate gendered relationships.

I will now explore the management system in terms of position and promotional opportunities in order to understand how both males and females in management are perceived. In addition, I will focus on the many differences between male and female management members in relation to school practices.

Chapter 5

13. School governance

The theme of school governance addresses the process and practices of decision-making in three sub-themes 1) decision-making, 2) management and perceptions, and 3) gendered relationships and management. This chapter discusses the way in which the functions of management as well as decision-making are practically implemented in schools, thereby addressing how the perceptions of male and female management members influence the process of decision-making. In addition, the chapter explores how the relationships between the genders are navigated and manipulated during the process of decision-making at the various educational levels.

13.1 Decision-making

The functions and responsibilities of management are centred on decision-making, coordination and control in the working environment. Decision-making in the working environment rests on the authority and power to delegate and command actions and behaviour in that environment. Decision-making is a major contributory factor to the development and progress of both males and females in both management and the lower ranks. Thus, decision-making is interlinked to promotions and positions as well as the implementation of policies, practices and processes which are supposed to be fair and equitable.

The process of actualising management functions is seated in the management styles which male and female management members employ to control and delegate authority, positions and actions in the working environment. Thus, within the school context the management styles contribute to both the school structures and the behavioural tendencies within the environment.

The process in which management members actualise their own gender is evident in the approach taken to managing the school context. Management members actualise their own genders in the process and measures of control, authority and power they implement. Management and decision-making is one of the most basic functions in educational institutions, especially in schools. Through this process of decision-making a variety of gendered practices emerge.

If we consider the role of decision-making in the school, it becomes clear that it not only determines the progress, abilities and opportunities of existing staff members but also contributes to the social environment of the school.

Furthermore, male and female management members' makes decisions in practice and thereby exercise power as a control mechanism and disciplinary strategies which are crucial to understanding gendered practices. Management and decision-making not only function as disciplinary measure and a control mechanism but become a process in which the reactions and actions of teachers are controlled, manipulated and navigated towards achieving a functional working environment which in line with the school's culture and tradition (Dahl 1961 in Akram et al 2015). Thus, the way in which gender is managed manipulated and regulated within the process of control and decision-making becomes important. The most basic functions in educational institutions, especially schools, therefore result in a variety of both gendered and ungendered practices.

It is thus important to explore and understand how management is perceived, how authority is actualised and how gender is implicated in these processes themselves and therefore not focusing on the practices and authoritarian styles which management may adopt but also focusing on the process itself and understanding how the different genders perceive the decision-making process from the various positional levels. Despite the fact that male and female management members may occupy equal or higher ranking positions, this may not necessarily translate into equally accepted authority or seniority in their relationships with each.

The process in which management actualises positions and decisions in practice can be explained in line with the ability of management to demote, promote and progress teachers in the school environment. For example, Gift's interview provided evidence of management's ability to influence the positions of teachers through the process of decision-making. Gift had been fired, or rather demoted from her position, on the day of her interview. When questioned as to why she had been demoted and how this had happened she claimed she felt that she had no say in the decision-making process and practices which influenced her job security and status, but she was unsure of why she had been demoted.

Gift described how she was demote: "*So I just heard that there's someone to replace me. "They told me to inform me that, to phone me about that person … that's why I'm saying, decisions, they just make it, and they come to you and explain to you that."*

Gift did not, however, exhibit either any form of emotion or understanding of what had happened or how this had affected her working environment. During the interview I struggled to understand why Gift was so accepting of her demotion and why she lacked any insight into the process itself. Why had she accepted her demotion so passively?

I realised that Gift accepted the processes and practice of management due to the fact that she was not sure how decision-making and demotions worked.

She accepted the authority and power vested in management and thus she accepted her demotion. Gift had not challenged management's decision nor did she question its authority to demote her in the first place. Thus, her interview revealed a deeply rooted process of navigation and manipulation of the positions of power and authority.

Management has the power to control the career progress and status of the women and men in the lower ranks of the school, thus resulting in the ability to control how the different genders are positioned in the school.

Management's power is not only vested in its ability to place personnel members but also in its ability to create and maintain a coordinated environment through the process of decision-making. Some participants were unaware of the process of decision-making and how this process is actualised at the school.

Lucy believed that the decisions made were beyond the principal's authority and jurisdiction. She believed that the decision-making authority was not linked to the principal's position but had, instead, been removed from the principal and conferred on the school governing body.

> *"I'm not sure but I think it's first the people that make the decisions whoever they are and then they eventually get to the principal and they eventually just let us know but I do feel it's probably the SGB makes the decisions and the principals just implement."*

When questioned about the principal authority, Lucy claimed that it *"seemed that everyone has equal authority at the school".* Thus, the notion of equality is grounded in the maintenance of gendered perceptions and a gendered decision-making process. Although the notion of equal authority is created through the practice of decision-making this does not, necessarily, mean that, in practice, the authority vested in the processes and positions is, in fact, perceived and understood as being equal in respect of the genders and/or the various positions.

As argued by Taylor (2013), Blackmore (2014) and Powell (2005), the notion and perception of equality is maintained through the coordination and manipulation of the working environment to the extent that individuals in the working environment habituate traditions and reproduce gender inequality practices. The participants provided evidence of a gender-blind school context in which, as described by the WHO (2015), gender equality becomes equivalent to being "fair" and ignoring all differences, social norms, roles and relations.

Lucy demonstrated that the collective ideal is created and maintained by gender parity which is, in turn, based on equal numerical numbers. Thus, gender blindness is automatically vested in numeric representation as well as the inability of schools to align with the aims and outcomes as stipulated in the Gender Equality Policies (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

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Thus, Lucy emphasised not only the perception of equality but seemed to be satisfied with the belief in the equality in numbers created in the working environment. When asked why she believed that the environment was equal Lucy cited the perceptions of the working environment. Lucy claimed: "*Well, there are two principals. They seem to have equal authority. Everyone listens to them equally. They share the roles well.*"

Lucy demonstrated the perception created and maintained by gender parity that, if the genders are represented equally, then equality must be achieved. In other words, if there is a male and a female principal then the genders may be presumed to be equal. This remains paramount to the argument that equality between the genders at managerial level has been subjugated by the numerical representation of the genders. It would appear that the equal numeric representation of male and female was the main theme of the equality campaigns in schools at the time of the study. Lucy was not the only participant who believed that having both a male and a female principal represented equality in the working environment.

Thus, as discussed in chapter one, parity not only neglects the cultural and social standings of men and women but fails to recognise how relations between the two may result in a fictatous equality (Bailey & Holmarsdottir 2016). Thus, the collective ideal of numeric representation has both eluded and cultivated a culture of numbers versus relations. This numerical process has become the collective as well as the individualised institutional ideal for schools and organisations.

Thus, management cultivates numeric positions but maintains unequal statuses, authority and power by sustaining gender-blind perspectives during decision-making. Management sustains numerical representation by canvasing for equally shared roles and positions between male and female as the purpose and aim of gender equality initiatives. Both males and females may thus be promoted and schools will then have a 50% representation of the two genders, but this does not mean that the authority, power and control vested in positions are perceived and accepted as the same in practice.

Rita demonstrated a stronger need for acceptance than Lucy and accounted for this via her management activities. Rita dispiritedly explained that her opinion was not taken account during the decision-making process,

> "*It does not count, most of the time. Sometimes, you … they ask you to contribute, and then what you agree on, then the next day you find that no, that's not what, that's not what's being followed.*"

Rita continued to explain that decision-making: "*I think it favours the women, actually, because men are not actually, we don't have a lot of male teachers in the school.*"

According to Rita, men were treated unfairly during the decision-making process because they were in the minority. Thus, as was evident in Rita's interview, management had seemingly managed to uphold the ideals of equality by ensuring the numerical representation of both women and men. Accordingly, the perceived ideal of numbers had become a process in which equality aimed at increasing male numbers in schools.

When asked why the decision-making favoured women, Rita explained "*I don't … maybe it's the nature of the profession, it's women …".* Thus, Rita clearly believed that gender equality in decision-making processes was based on the numerical ratio between males and females. Moreover, males, rather than women, were discriminated against due to numbers rather than relationships. Rita discounted male positions and authority and, instead, cited the numbers of males and females.

Thus, a gender-blind situation has been initiated in the school context as both male and females account for equally shared authority and power in terms of numbers. If the numbers and positions are equal, then equality has been achieved, thus gender inequality is supported and sustained by the failure to recognise unequal relationships between the genders.

On the other hand, the male participants appeared not to believe that numerical representation was central to equality. The tendency to accept the numerical representation of males and females as evidence of equality appeared to be more typical of the female participants than of the male participants. I found this very interesting as numbers do not reveal or indicate either whether authority is equal or whether there is a gendered difference between males and females in practice. Hence, the notion created that gender parity has manifested to the extent that authority is based on numerical representation to ensure equality although unable to establish the aims and outcomes of gender equality initiatives.

In agreement with Lucy and Rita, Carol explained the numerical trend as follows:

> *"In education, equal authority. It's so hard to say because I feel like we have a few males here so I would guess women have more authority in education in my opinion. We just don't have many men here to say otherwise but in education in a whole, I think it's a female dominated industry."*

As was evident in Carol's interview, the female participants believed that, by default, the numerical representation of females in education would result in their having more authority in decision-making as compared to the men who are the minority. In contrast to Carol, Ashley believed that the numbers were irrelevant and that it was not possible for the management functions and decision-making to be gender based*: "Yes, I think decision-making is fair. We don't have much men, so I don't think it could be gender biased. So it's fair."*

Thus, clearly the unequal practices in decision-making and of management were unchallenged as fairness as they understand it was based on numerical values. There was thus failure to recognise that fairness does not result in equality and that it also fails to address unequal status, roles and discriminating factors at the school.

Therefore, the debased implementation of equality as a numerical value overshadows the way in which policies should be enacted and implemented in management practices and in decision-making.

In view of the fact that the policies which are implemented in education are implemented in a gender-blind education system, which has been debased by numerical values, the results, as envisioned by the Department of Basic Education, are not being achieved. Ironically, policies are continuously being redrafted and enacted to address the statistically reported issues between the genders but, in reality, no actual processes and practices have been changed and neither have actual equality and equity being realised.

Thus, it becomes of crucial importance to understand the way in which the perceptions of both management and the lower ranking teachers are navigated and how the lower ranking teachers perceive the two genders in management. In other words, the perceptions of the genders, as represented in specific positions, are crucial to understanding how the relationships and practices of inequality remain embedded in the school, as an understanding of how gender is perceived in management positions.

13.2 Management perceptions

The perceptions of management should be discussed from both male and female perspectives as well as positional perspectives to arrive not only at an accurate analysis of gendered relationship but also the relationship between management and teachers. As argued by Baily and Holmarsdottir (2015), the decision-making methods used by both male and female management members depend primarily on "management styles" as well as "personality types" which attempt to rectify and address discriminating factors evident in management positions in education.

In the school in question, both the male principal and the female principal used a top down as well as a bottom up approach. Female management members tended to rather a top down approach to implementing policy and in their decision-making practices whereas male management members employed a more "natural" method.

The natural method in which males as described by participants was seated in male authority and leadership which was not forced as seen in female management.

The top down approach used by female management assisted in maintaining control through reporting mechanisms but it also impacted on the gendered perceptions of the lower ranking teachers.

Both the male and the female teachers in the lower ranks felt that, although they were asked to participate in decision-making, their voices were not heard by female management.

In addition, female management also failed to recognise the attempts made by lower ranking individuals to become involved in the processes and practices which concerned their positions and the subjects they taught.

In the majority of organisations management is perceived as central to the organisation and to control within the organisation most lower ranking individuals do not always sustain these gendered ideals. This was very evident in Thembi's case as, although she respected the position of management, she nevertheless wanted to contribute to the school's issues and decisions which she though would add value to her classroom and to the functioning of the school. However, Thembi did not demonstrate management and leaderships skills despite her wish to be heard and to participate in the decision-making process. Although there were few opportunities for promotion into a management position, there was no reason why management could not allow individual teachers to contribute to the process itself. Thembi appeared disappointed as she explained how she had been excluded from the decision-making process. This had disempowered her as individual and had contributed to her resignation from the school.

> *"As a staff and I find it difficult because I can't agree just because everyone else agrees, or I can't disagree because I kind of feel you know when everyone else agrees then you the only one who disagrees kind of and so I feel like that and I end up just being there."*

It is important to recognise the mentality described by Thembi, which may emerge in a coordinated and controlled social environment. The individual is forced to agree and to be part of the collective ideals in the working environment. This sense of belonging, as is exclusion, is socially and practically habituated through group pressure and management authority to dictate and control behaviour to ensure cohesion (Foucault 1984). As seen in Thembi's interview, the sense of the collective overwhelms the individual to the extent that they conform.

Thembi had not agreed with the collective or the majority of teachers but, instead of voicing her concerns or her opinions, she had felt obliged to conform and be subject to the collective (Foucault 1948). However, Thembi was not the only participant who had experienced this phenomenon.

The majority of the post participants also expressed that they had wanted to express their opinions and that they believed that their opinions and contributions would have been of value and should have been be heard. However, in most of these cases the participants had felt constrained by position, gender and authority.

Thus, clearly management not only imposed it position, authority and power on the other male and female members of staff but it also created an effect which I term the suppressed management functions.

By suppressed management functions I mean the ability of management not to control but rather to suppress individuals. Thus giving rise to counteractive repercussion in the working environment. Management often suppresses those individuals who tend to challenge the collective ideals and habits embedded in the processes and practices which are closely linked to positions of authority in order to encourage conformist and group-like behaviour to ensure cohesion for the purposes of control.

Within this type of suppressed management system, individuals are unaware of the management process and practices concerning decision-making while also, in a sense, displaying a tendency to accept all decisions made unanimously. These individuals describe the school context as fair or equal due to the navigation and manipulation of perceptions, for example gender blindness.

Vicky explained her perception of management as follows:

> "I would say in our school because we've only got a few men, most of the decisions are made by women. I do believe that if there's a, male headmaster they, do have a little bit a – more authority, but I also believe that men, if they are in like a headmaster they, they allow people to make more of their own decisions, while women are really afraid of making mistakes so they will rather know – keep the reigns in and just let you, you know, go according to the rules, whereby men's like a little bit more open-minded in a, in managerial position."

I found Vicky to be both passionate and outspoken. She also seemed to be at odds about the theoretical policies and practical process enacted in the school environment. Vicky was perplexed about the promotion of teachers to management positions as well as about the differences in the way in which male and female management members carried out their management functions. Vicky tended to favour male management in the school environment. However, I was not able determine the reason for this although it appeared that Vicky may have believed that females were, in a sense, weaker in management positions than males.

In her interview Sarah expressed the opinion that female management members tended to demonstrate control to such an extent that this demotivated the teachers while also causing them to doubt their own capabilities. Why do female women management members impose their power and positions on teachers in an overcompensating manner?

Vicky and Sarah both believed that the reasons for this could in found in the fact that they were female to begin with and had a fear of being challenged in their management positions. Why do women in management automatically feel threatened?

As argued by Ahl (2000), it may be that, because of the nature of the position, women are bound to fail due to the fact that they are measured against male criteria (Van Eck & Volman 1996; Moorosi 2006). It may also be women in management believe, as do many others, that positions of power are socially and culturally male orientated.

How, then, does this translate to decision-making? Women in management often overcompensate for their gender by exerting authority and control upon in all areas of the school environment and its social context. On the other hand, it is also natural to enact position and power through the decision-making process in spite of the fact that lower ranking males and females may not perceive it as such. When professional relations are managed and controlled as the collective, this overshadows equity needs. It would seem that female management members, more so than their management counterparts, adhere to the individualised collective of women and men with the organisation and control of the working environment becoming deeply rooted in the standardised and collective treatment of all women and men as the same. This, in turn, nullifies equity and equality purposes in practice as the individual organisational needs of the individual are ignored although gender equality perceptions are maintained through an equal number of positions for males and females.

Peter's interview led to an interesting argument. Peter had made a paradoxical statement by claiming that *"it's considered, maybe it is, it depends on who is at the top, who is making decisions but from my point the women and the men have both got the same equal standing at this school"*. At the time of the interview Peter was occupying a position of management and authority. It may have been that Peter did manage his relations with males and females in the same way and, thus, who is at the top depended upon their position and also the way in which relations were managed from the top downwards in the system.

In contrast to the female teachers' opinions, Peter believed everyone was equal, whereas the female's teachers were of the view that they were superior due to the fact that they were in the majority. However, Peter did not use numbers as the determining factor in equality but instead asserted that equality depended on the management members, relations and perceptions in the working environment and how these gendered practices were implemented.

Management maintains and creates the perception of realising gender equality together with being fair and ensuring equality between the genders. The traditions which are then created and established in the working environment enforce and recreate patterns of inequality. Not only do men and women both participate in the reproduction of these patterns and processes but they also believe these remain gender equal and fair.

Although it may appear that both genders are equal and treated fairly, within the deeply rooted understanding of what being male and female entails, a variety of perceptions and realities emerge. As seen in Ron's interview, the male and female teachers and management perceived decision-making and the decisions made differently, with both genders responding in different ways to the gender of the person who had made the decision in the first place.

Ron described a remarkable phenomenon: *"Really, the men, they accept what they tell them to do. But the females; they want answers. Uh, they go into it and don't accept it the first time. Uh, they want to discuss it. So, I think there is a difference how they accept it. Yes. I think so."*

Thus, not only was there a difference in the perceptions of male and female management but also in the way in way in which lower ranking teachers navigated their relations with management. Not only did the female teachers challenge both authority and the decision-making process but they also questioned the decision which had been made.

Perhaps as argued by Peter, it "*depends who is at the top".* The female teachers challenged male decision-making and authority but did not challenge discrepancies in respect of the labour division as well as the workload and roles assigned to females in practice. But, why challenge the decisions made and not the authority of the male management members in question? It may be that the correct interpretation could be linked to a trust in the ability of the male management to make the correct and most appropriate decisions.

It may have been that the female teachers in this case did not agree with or trust the ability of the male management members to make an informed decision although they may also have doubted that they had the necessary experience to do so. However, in her interview Sarah expressed a different perspective on the teachers' perceptions of management: "*There was just quite an autocratic way of like, this is this is the decision, this is what you are doing, this is what we want to see, end of story. "It was the female principal that decided that she knew better what my lesson plan in maths would be.*

It was therefore clear that female management members sometimes overstepped the boundaries between classroom authority, and their personal capacity to oversee the functioning of the school.

The female management member to whom Sarah was referring had created a doubt in Sarah's mind as to her abilities as a female educator and had, presumably, also imposed her authority and position on Sarah. As a result, Sarah perceived that female management was both autocratic, and control-centred. It emerged from the interviews with the other participants that, compared to their female counterparts, the male management members appeared to implement a less autocratic method of control and allow for personal and professional decision-making.

Peter elaborated upon the differences between male and female management and indicated that he accepted these differences as different management styles. He stated that "*it depends on the management, their management styles that both principals have got different management styles. The one listens and the other one does not listen.*" When asked who listened, Peter said that the *"male principal listens, the female* principal however*; "Well she always asks for your opinion, most of the time she asks your opinion but she will, she just does it to put it out there but she usually just takes her own, she makes up her own mind anyway even if it is a good idea"*. "*Decision or whatever you have made, whatever you have come up with, she is still, she still takes her own point of, her own point of view".*

Thus, it appeared that Peter was dissatisfied with the methods used and approaches taken by female management members. Perhaps, as argued above, females in management positions feel the need not only to defend their positions but to act in the same way in which they believe male authority and management would behave, thereby demonstrating their gendered perspective of male authority.

As socially and culturally expected, I question why women display a greater tendency than men to demonstrate gender perspectives, ideals and roles. It may be that women are more inclined to social and cultural tendencies and traditions than men and also that they have a greater need to conform compared to men. Management functions have been intertwined between positions of authority and gender, in which each position is applied and uniquely critiqued, explored and considered for the purpose of decision-making, roles and relationships.

13.3 Management and relationships

Management in relation to gender focuses on the understanding of how gender is recognised and interpreted within the roles of management and the lower ranking positions. Accordingly, I address the perceptions created and maintained in the school context through the processes and practices of management with the aim of understanding how male and female management relations are supported, coordinated and upheld in a working environment and also how lower ranking teachers navigate these relations.

It appeared that the relationships between management and the lower ranking teachers encompassed a variety of factors in the school environment. The first such factor is the experience of the individuals which in turn dictates how they understand and navigate their relationships with both males and females. The second factor is the gender of the individual teacher and the third the decision-making abilities and authority of these individual teachers as well as their personal perceptions.

We navigate these relationships through a process of understanding ourselves in relation to others of either higher or lower ranking positions. It is to be expected that relations between males and females depend on cultural and religious beliefs as well as personal reservations and past experiences. How, then, do we make sense of the complicated relationship between the genders when power and authority are also involved in these relationships?

Accordingly, I addressed the male and female management members both as a collective and as individuals in order to understand how management was perceived in general, as well as how gender was represented in the management positions.

Thus, I started with Sarah's explanations of female management. Sarah explained the female management styles in a very sarcastic way. At times she seemed to be against a female management system as the abilities, relationships and authority of female management are not accepted or experienced in the same as those of male management.

> *"You don't get a lot of male figures in positions that, like in high, high up positions but thinning, I think they get, the male figure tends to get more respect in terms of implementing policy and I feel that females in a position of power tend to be more controlling, because they sense that they need to fight for their respect. So generally you will find male principals, or males in HOD position, far more relaxed and easy about the way they, they expect things done whereas female principals and HOD's tend to be more strict, controlling, exert more, they want to exert their power."*

Sarah's description of the differences between male and female management seemed to support the views of the other participants. Sarah claimed that males tend to be accorded more respect in higher positions than females. As argued above, the patriarchal tendencies still present in the South African education system not only hold positional differences but also impact directly on the way in which male and female management members are perceived. Thus, males "*get more respect"* due to the perceived believed natural authority and social positions men hold.

Martha, who has been in the education system for 27 years, tended to accept all structural changes as she had spent her entire career at one school.

Thus, her approaches to gender, relationships and practices had been habituated to such an extent that she did not even realise it. Martha represented an example of the habituated female teacher who has grown accustomed to all the practices and processes in force in her working environment and thus reproduces them in the school environment unintentionally.

Martha explained how she, as a manager, perceived males and equal authority in education: "*I think so. It's difficult to say, because we have so few men at our school.*

But I think men are definitely taken seriously, taken more seriously". When questioned as to why, Martha, explained that *"I think it's because there's so few men, so"*.

Although Martha generally believed that equality had been achieved and that gender in education did not influence the decision-making processes and authority, she did, however, acknowledge the strong hold of males in terms of their genders, authority and positions. Martha believed this was centred on the traditions and social practices which has been passed down from one generation to the next in most educational organisations (schools) and social environments, stating that "*but it's the way it used to be long ago, and, socially, it's still like that in a way*".

Thus, Martha clearly recognised the fact that socially and culturally gendered roles and expectations have been reproduced and continuously embedded in the understanding of authority and power between men and women with these social and cultural traditions maintaining and enforcing the roles and expectations of males and females in educational organisations and the school.

As was evident in Sarah's interviews that the social and cultural boundaries between men and women have remained the same. Men are seen as natural managers and women are criticised for their attempts to demonstrate and deliver the same expectations as men in management positions. It may be that the social and cultural demands on the male gender allow for the habitual reinforcement of the male stereotypes bestowing on men a sense of entitlement rather than competition or the need to defend their positions against others as had been evidenced by the female management members. As Martha explained, gender perceptions have been socially imposed on the school environment, as a result, educational positions, power and authority are navigated accordingly.

Sarah further elaborated on the social and cultural beliefs which manifested in the roles of males and females in school.

> "*There sense of control. Position. A lot more, and it probably stems from the fact that they don't feel as respected by their colleagues*".

> *"A male just expects to be respected and so he gets it, whereas a female in that position doesn't quite, she feels like she needs to earn it and so she, she goes a little bit to the other extreme. I am not saying that they are bad. I am just pointing out".*

Therefore, in practice, although males and females have equal positions, their authority, seniority and management styles are not accepted and/or experienced in the same way at lower levels. Accordingly, female management is criticised for its management style and decision-making processes rather than being valued or respected for these qualities.

It would thus seem that, in practice, when the educational (school) practices of female management are measured against those of males, they are not as accepted. This tendency seems to be especially pronounced between the females at the various levels at the school. I did consider that same gender competition may perhaps have increased the dissatisfaction between the lower ranking females and female management but, as was seen in Peter's interview, the males appeared to tend towards the same idea. Thus, the question remains as to how gender may manifest in decision-making if both males and females reject female management and leadership?

Firstly, I established how gender was embedded in decision-making. I found that it is embedded in the acceptance of female authority through decision-making, with gender being seated in the management styles and approaches used in practice. Male management members tended to take the opinions of personnel members into account and made them feel not only trusted and worthy but also appreciated through the decision-making practices and shared authority of the males.

Although males do exercise authority and control it would seem that this authority and control are a natural outcome of their relationships with the personnel. These relationships appeared to result in more mutual respect than the relationships between female management members and staff. The females faced challenges and criticism for their position, authority, decision-making methods and leadership styles although not for their competency but as a result of the natural way in which male authority is proclaimed at the school.

One may therefore argue that it may be that women are not promoted to management and management positions due to both their lack of natural authority and the sense of control which they appear to deem to be of the utmost importance in their attempt to be equal to the males in the same positions. However, this does not equate to equality or to an equal educational environment which is characterised by equal unbiased perceptions. I therefore maintain that we have fostered two distinct issues in the school environment. The first issue is that of a gender-blind school environment, in which we fail to recognise that, despite their career progress, their authority, power and positions remain questionable.

The second issue is that positions and numerical values do not equate to fair gender practices and are not synonymous with equality and equity. The data reflected that participants were convinced of two things, equal numbers amounts to equality, although this was said to be equal female management was still rejected. Thus, a gender-blind approach was evident at the secondary school in question.

For example, the male and female teachers made clear distinctions between male and female management, with female management members being deemed unworthy and uncooperative. I maintain that the female management members were criticised by the participants not because they were in management positions but because they were female. According to the participants, female management members lacked the ability to listen to other teachers and their perspectives in relation to the delegation of responsibilities and workload, as well as the decisions that affected the subjects they taught. It would thus appear that female management lacked the ability to relinquish control to others.

Jacob shyly admitted that, in contrast with others in the same working environment:

> *"I can't be making decisions that I have never dealt with or never seen before, so there needs to be someone with experience, and that knows exactly what they're doing. Because if I had to try and make some decisions, I've only started this year, so I might not be making the wisest or the best decision in terms of the school's eyes. So ja, no, there's definitely authority that needs to…"*

It was thus clear that Jacob believed that experience was essential in decision-making and that this experience was closely allied to position, thus determining who had the authority and seniority to make a decision. Although Jacob was a novice teacher with only six months' teaching experience, he had already been appointed as a manager. Thus, Jacob's lack of experience did, perhaps, mean that his opinion was more theoretical than practical. I also noticed that Jacob had a tendency to answer diplomatically and that he seemed to be hesitant to offend anyone, including me. He also seemed reluctant to actually answer the questions whereas the more experienced teachers were quite honest and serious in voicing their opinions and experiences.

As mentioned above Jacob was in a management position. He described his relations with both his male and female colleagues as neutral. He stated that he regarded these relations and gendered processes as a form of communication.

> *"I don't think so no, in my personal opinion again for me, not really. It doesn't matter whether it's a male approaching a male approaching a female or a female approaching a male.*

If it's something that the school needs, or we as the school need, or needs to do, it doesn't matter, it's just a line of communication that we need to go through, there's no gender barriers or anything like that."

Hence, Jacob clearly believed that decision-making was central to the needs and wants of a school and thus not specific to any one person or as being of any personal nature. Jacob clearly favoured an emotional distance between work practicality and personal reasoning. I found this very interesting as most of the female participants in this study had separated the two and had conceptualised all the problems and responses in relation to decision-making as a personal attack on them.

Jacob may have emerged as a shy and diplomatically correct male manager but, in the later conversations, he started to focus on gender distinctions. I subsequently considered the possibility that the interview process itself had led to the awakening of gender awareness on the part of some of the participants and they had only realised their own gender biased assumptions and opinions during the interview process.

With Sarah's sarcastic perceptions of male management I noticed that Sarah not only rejected female management but that she also had an issue with males. I found this very interesting and wondered what her preferences would be if both male and female management members did not meet with her approval.

Sarah cited two interesting facts, namely, traditional roles and lower income schools, in her explanation of gender and management.

"Stronger authority, I think it is a social thing more. In different social context let's say, in your lower income schools where the traditional male, female roles are much more pronounced".

What are the traditional male and female roles? And how do these correlate with the income of a school? As explained by Thembi in chapter one, the rural and lower income schools tend to appoint more males in leadership positions than upper income schools. Sarah supported this view of Thembi in her interview. As discussed by Thembi, in these communities boys are encouraged to attend school while girls have to take *"other job"* opportunities. Clearly, not only is there no equality for female teachers but the girls in these lower income areas are not given equal access to educational opportunities.

In the main the higher or middle class schools tend to practise some form of equality and equity. For example, females are promoted into management and leadership positions although their authority and positional power are questioned.

Parity initiatives have clearly neglected to address the acceptance of females in positions of authority and the possible impact of social and cultural traditions on schools. It is appalling that the specific lower income community and schools which Thembi refers to, continue to practise gender preference based education for the learners as well as perpetuating the traditional and cultural roles of males and females in the school due to both social and cultural bias. Gender inequality in education remains an ongoing practice which is embedded in management, appointments, promotions and positions.

Sarah further elaborated on the functionality of schools, with schools having an *"autocratic way of delegating responsibilities and making decisions"* with males and females being addressed and categorised as a collective group for the purpose of managing the working environment in order to ensure a coordinated and controlled environment. The way in which this has been practised is a further of aspect of understanding the role of gender in inequality practices. Sarah referred to her personal experience in which management decision-making had impacted directly on the subject she taught:

> *"I don't know, you might have someone who is senior to you and this is just a personal experience I have had. But has absolutely no clue about your subject matter. But regardless of the fact that they know nothing about your subject matter, in fact they couldn't probably solve a quarter of you know their expected to, but because they are senior to you, they can make decisions regarding that subject matter that have nothing, that, I can't explain it but like the decision that they make doesn't take into account the general knowledge or the depth of knowledge you require so they are making their decisions without the knowledge required to make that decision and it can be a wrong decision but if you tell them no but you know this doesn't work or this doesn't apply, then you know wow".*

Sarah explained such behaviour as being gender specific in the school environment. Sarah's explanation highlighted the conflict between position, authority, gender and knowledge. An individual may be in a position and authority to make decisions but this does not necessarily mean that this must be forced in practice or that other will willingly accept this.

Thembi described the social and cultural roles of the genders as she had experienced them:

> *"A lot of men are in charge you know at the top you know management positions are usually a man and you know in the household there is this thing, I mean even though we live in the 21st century but we still have those men who feel they are the head and they can never be the tale, they can never be your partner, you know equal to a women … they are still more in authority".*

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As was clear in Thembi's interview, the intersection between the social and cultural practices in society has become entrenched in the school environment, especially in relation to the positions of males and females. It was interesting to note Thembi's words that males "*can never be your partner, or equal to women*".

I had to consider why men would not be able to or want to be equal to females and what this equality meant in the case of Thembi, as well as Martha. Martha explained *"that men are taken more seriously than women, or it's their authority is more seen as law, than women. I don't know why, it's tradition I think"*.

I will share the current notion of current equality as portrayed in the interviews with Thembi and Martha interview using one of the most daunting quotes I have ever read in a book, namely, in *Animal Farm* (Orwell 1945: 112), "*We are all equal, some are just more equal than others".* In her interview Thembi stated that, although males and females may be in equal positions the males will, however, always remain "more equal" than the females. Presumably, males by default, according to Thembi, are not able to accept and/or relinquish personal and social authority despite the progress and empowerment of women.

If considered in relation to Orwell (1945:112) statement, men and women may, as a result of parity initiatives, have been moved up into equal positions and which, supposedly, signifies equality but, nevertheless, the genders are not equal and they will remain unequal in a gender blind school culture. Furthermore, the relationships between management and lower ranking teachers are gendered through practices, processes and decision-making as well as the group mentality which has been adopted. I considered that this may, perhaps, be the aim of parity, namely, to create and maintain the misconception that numbers equate to equality and that numbers provide the ideal method to determine whether one is equal to an individual of the opposite gender. Ironically, instead of questioning how, most schools have enforced and encouraged this perception for the purpose of cohesion and control.

Kumara explained the establishment of a patriarchal society in the school environment and, outside of religious beliefs and cultural traditions as follows*: "We still stuck in that almost like a patriarchal thing there always that underlying current of just man has the final say".* Kumara further explained that the *man is the head of the house, he has the final say, the men must always, even if you can put everything in place but the men must just ok yes go ahead that's fine".* Not only did Kumara explain how cultural and social decision-making works but perhaps also how the lines between school practices and social and cultural traditions have merged into a perceived system of equality. Thus, in a patriarchal system, decisions are still dependent on male approval and acceptance.

This being said, one must also consider that, although an individual may be in a senior position, this does not necessarily translate into adequate decision-making *"Women do not have the same seniority or understanding in certain cultures"*.

Thus, if we consider the differences between male and female management styles, authority and seniority within the context of the relationships between management and lower ranking teachers, it is clear that, not only do the males and females in authority and management positions behave differently but they are also experienced differently by others. Thus, not only does the reluctance to promote women become evident but the aim of promoting women into equal positions fails to recognise that, in practice, although women have been promoted, they continue to be treated unequally.

Accordingly, females in authority still fear being preyed upon or questioned in comparison to their male counterparts' authority and that results in their being perceived as uncooperative and averse to allow personal members to take control or make their own decisions. If we analyse how male teachers sustain and negotiate their relationships with male management, a different set of rules becomes evident. Not only do males experience a more relaxed relationship with male management as compared to female management members but they describe the relationships as an "open door policy". Clearly, male teachers experienced their relationships with female management as labored in comparison to their relationships with male management.

Not only did the participants demonstrated gendered notions of management but they also tended towards a stereotypical description of male management versus female management in the decision-making processes. Betty described her relationships with males as labored and rather disrespectful: "*in a meeting; when I said; this is policy. We are going to do it according to this … he just turned his back and he walked away.*" Therefore, not only do males not accept female leaderships or rather authority but will "*deny behaving and acting*" accordingly although his body *"language"* reflected something different, "*because naturally in our, country that the male is the leaders … I think it's the other way around; when the women is the leader; then others are asking questions. I don't know why it's like that.*"

Most male managers however described their relationships with others in the working environment as neutral and natural without being challenged. Thus, the relationships embedded in management and leadership are directly dependent upon gender with gender dictating the way in which lower ranking individuals react and behave, and how these relationships are maintained in the school environment.

The differences as described above are in line with Acker's (2012) description of interpersonal conflict between the genders.

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Acker (2012) argues that, compared to males, females in managerial positions experience more relational and interpersonal conflict due to gender expectations as well as the fact that all arguments surrounding management will be based on the notion that women are prone to emotional reactions and thus they are not capable of competing or performing at the management level.

The conflict in the interpersonal relationships between females may be exacerbated because many women demonstrate less diplomacy with one another. On the other hand, relationships between females and males may be characterised by male authority which is enforced and deployed in an attempt to gain control of a situation in light of the fact that they are of a lower rank (Acker 2012).

For example, Ron's interview provided evidence of how male and female managerial members experienced conflict with lower ranking female teachers: *"The men, they accept what they tell them to do. But the females; they want answers".*

Thus, not only do the parity results not reflect the internal workings of the school environment but they neglect to rectify and address the unequal gender relationships between management members as based on authority, power and position. It would, therefore, appear that the issue of interpersonal relations has not been touched upon.

The decision-making process acknowledges the existence of the stereotypes of males and females in the working environment. However, instead of these stereotypes being challenged they are maintained by attempts to perpetuate, rather than demolish, gendered activities. Gender stereotypes have become a functional element of the communication, interaction and relational practices in schools and organisations. In addition, both males and females have become accustomed to these stereotypical notions of genders to such an extent that these stereotypes act as reference and framework for the support of tradition, school culture and decision-making.

Thus, gender is embedded in decision-making, authority and seniority with women becoming the flagships for transformation in positions except the education system was designed for male dominance and, women fail to due to the nature of the authority and power men that attach to positions and their gender (Ahl, 2000). Accordingly, if women are mismanaged as human resource and placed in management to enhance the notion of gender equality, gender equality will remain a theoretical perspective (Baily & Holmarsdottir 2015; Chilisa & Ntseane 2010).

13.4 Conclusion

The perceptions and patriarchal stereotypes which govern the school environment continuously reinforce the gendered roles and responsibilities of males and females.

Ironically, we have been presented with the misconception of challenging patriarchy due to the positions created to promote women into equal positions with men. However, these women do not generally enjoy the same authority or power in these positions as men (Dhlamini 2015). It may be that gender has become a tradition of understanding and the attempt to uplift women will always be crippled by the traditions of male versus female in practice which, in the a patriarchal society, are upheld through the traditional roles of males and females.

How, then, may the social norms or, rather, the stereotypical misconceptions that cultivate patriarchal norms be challenged? Not only have women themselves failed to challenge the patriarchy and social cultivated ideals which place them in subjugated positions but they also appear to have become comfortable with the safety offered of subjugation and suppression. Accordingly, women have become followers and, in addition, they have become submerged in gender unequal statuses for the purpose of job security and safety rather than challenging patriarchal systems

Thus, it would seem that, although promotion in educational institutions (schools) promote gender equality, it is inadequately addressing the relationships between management and lower ranking teachers and, especially, the conformities that govern these relationships. Together with understanding the way in which positions and authority are negotiated between men and women in practice as positions become irrelevant and dominance and subjugation become a method for progression and advancement.

Although gender equality and parity statistics claim that women are being promoted into positions equal to those of males there is, nevertheless, a failure to recognise that in practice women are still discriminated against through the relational qualities which they fail to challenge themselves. Thus, female empowerment and promotion into supposedly equitable positions do not equate to equality, not due to the policy being implemented or male dominance, but as a result of women being unable to challenge social standing and norms. Thus, women are not only conforming but they are also becoming accustomed to accepting the unequal power and gender relationships in their professional environments.

How, then, is gender seated in decision-making in education? It is, in fact, embedded in our culture of practices between men and women and it is also seated in the ability of males and females in management to navigate their gender together with their power and authority.

As well as present a united front and improve the performance of a school though the process of decision-making. Gender is not only seated in the processes but is also used as a form of power. Males tend to exert their male power when challenged by female authority or by females of an equal or lower rank to theirs.

Thus, decision-making not only becomes a form of power between management members but it may also be witnessed when addressing seniority. Seniority is based not only on position but also on age and years of experience and thus seniority may be seen as a form of decision-making and power because it is used during the process of implementation and coordination.

This implies a variety of gendered practices because, as established above, males and females in higher posts behave differently compared to each other and are also treated differently despite the fact that they may have the same position and/or status. Not only have these relationships between men and women been manipulated by the acceptance of existing power relationships but challenging these relationships for the purpose of transforming education in the interests of gender equality has been neglected.

<center>**Chapter 6**</center>

<center>**14. Division of labour**</center>

Division of labour addresses three specific themes that emerged from the data: 1) allocation of workload and 2) extramural responsibilities.

The allocation of workload at the school depends on position, gender and authority. Thus, in order to understand how the allocation process is facilitated and negotiated in practice the processes and practices in a school should be explored, as should the way in which workloads are allocated on a gender basis. The allocation of workloads includes the division of academic workload e.g. academic subjects as well as the positions of teachers in the school.

The section on extramural activities focuses on the allocation of sports related responsibilities and positions to males and females in a school environment as well as understanding how the social and cultural perceptions of gender influence the process of allocating male and female teachers to specific sporting and/or extramural cultural activities.

14.1 Allocation of work

The process in terms of which the workload is assigned to and divided between the teachers at the school is based on the principles of hours worked, qualifications and gender. It must be recognised that the school environment encompasses a significant variety of activities and responsibilities which may seem to be gendered but which, in fact, may be shared between all the personnel members.

In exploring the process in terms of which these roles and responsibilities were assigned by management, I had to consider how positions in management, authority and seniority influenced this process.

In addition, I had to take into account the way male and female teachers experienced and interpreted both the allocation process and the activities assigned to them.

The participants characterised the process used to divide the workload as voluntary. Teachers are given the opportunity to choose their responsibilities and extramural activities which would be assigned to them at the beginning of the school year as well as at the start of the school term.

The participants in the study explained that most of the teachers wrote down their names and surnames under a specific cultural or sport activity and the documentation was then sent to the principal.

The school management team and the principal held quarterly or annual meetings to discuss the extramural responsibilities. Each teacher's workload is considered when activities are approved and/or assigned to them.

Despite the fact that, in the majority of cases, the personnel members' choice of extramural activities is accepted and noted as confirmed, it did appear that some of the participants were given additional responsibilities or they were not assigned the activity they had chosen and were obliged to take responsibility for another activity.

Most of the participants described this process as fair because generally the needs of each individual teacher were taken account. The majority of the participants were also of the opinion that this process meant that the hours, qualifications and needs of each teacher were taken into account.

There was, however, a minority group that believed the process was unfair. They stated that that there was no paper trail of the process and the decisions made and thus they were not given the opportunity to address any issues or complaints. They argued that they had no say in the activities assigned to them and that the process used restricted them.

It did appear that the process, as described by the participants, had neglected to take into account the workload per subject. Ashley, in particular, felt that the process was unfair as "*you get told what you will be teaching, and this does not consider the workload per subject*". Thus, the process increased the work stress and workload of certain teachers compared to those of other teachers. However, the data reflected that the unfair and unequal practices were not embedded in the process of decision-making or the division of extramural activities but stemmed from the unfair division of the workload between personnel members.

In addition to the process used to allocate and divide the workload, the age, income and position of staff members increased the discrepancies between their workload.

The data reflected that compared to other members of staff, departmental heads and management members were responsible for fewer extramural activities and also their academic workload was lighter. Martha explained that teachers on the same post level were allocated an equal number of teaching periods, stating that "*department heads teach the same amount, post level one teachers teach the same amount*". This, however, is not in accordance with equity principles nor does it result in fair practices. Although it seems fair to allocate academic workload in accordance with position levels, this does not take into account the individual teacher's organisational needs as stated in the Equity and Equality Policy (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

Vicky also explained that some teachers maintained that they would not participate in extramural activities or take on an extra academic workload because they would not "*get paid for that"*. Thus, it would seem that some personal members do not volunteer or make themselves available in the interests of a fair and equal division of extramural activities.

According to Vicky, this was also the case with some staff members who had been working at the school for a long time, maintaining that they did not "*feel like doing anything anymore*". As a result, they were allocated fewer extramural activities and a smaller academic workload compared to the newer members of staff. Vicky elaborated on this assertion and claimed that this process meant that extra responsibilities and more extramural activities were assigned to the younger, less experienced teachers.

This unequal balance between novice teachers and senior teachers gives rise to two distinct problems, namely, novice teachers suffering because senior personnel assume that, due to their age, they do not have "*family responsibilities*". Not only do the senior personnel members assume that they have the authority to determine the responsibilities of novice teachers but also that they have the authority to shift their responsibilities to the younger teachers without the consideration or approval of management.

Hence, unfair power relationships encourage unequal responsibilities and inequitable labour division. In addition, unequal power relations may result in an inability to challenge and reconstruct these relationships to ensure that they are in keeping with equity and equality initiatives. Unequal power relations are, thus, perpetuated through both the unfair allocation of the workload between senior and junior teachers and also the delegation process, which results in communication issues between teachers and management members as well as between teachers at the same post level.

What is the relationship between extramural activities and gender? Well, the relationships described above were specifically those between "*female teachers*".

Vicky described males as being easier to work with during the delegation of activities and responsibilities as they tend to address the problem at hand and resolve it without bearing any acrimony.

Vicky claimed that, on the other hand, females tend to hold onto social and emotional grudges and personal intentions that result in an environment that is characterised by muddled communication and behaviour. In addition to the social order, there is usually also a social hierarchy and division into groups which not only enforce the social divide and conflict in the working environment but which also lead to a segregated workforce.

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Although gender inequality is specifically aimed at conflict between females and males, conflict between females may have the same consequences. Females may also navigate their status among one another in an unequal manner through the implementation of authority, power and seniority.

Females themselves are also governed by a collective idea of social and hierarchical standing and, as a result, establish unequal relations through the implementation of the social power vested in behaviour, communication and interaction. This is particularly pronounced in relation to attempts to address the equal division of labour and the academic workload.

When addressing the issue of specific academic workload and positions, the study found that males and females expressed different opinions on the various processes and practices which are deployed to allocate responsibilities and subjects. Accordingly, the data reflected that subjects are not assigned in line with gender; instead subjects are allocated according to the teachers' qualifications and the departmental regulations in respect of the official academic workload.

The data showed females as being better at "*administrative tasks*" in comparison to men who are better at "*physical"* activities. Thus, the responsibilities and workload of women and men are based on the gender perceptions of males and females at the school. Women are delegated administrative tasks which also include *"baby showers, birthdays, catering and organisation of events"* with women being described by their male counterparts as being *"good at decorations and planning".* Thus, the perceived capabilities of women directly determined their activities and the expected roles they were expected to fulfil.

It appeared that the allocation of subjects is a somewhat complex issue with the discrepancies between males and females being based on the perceptions of gender as well as the conflict between equal and unequal processes.

Ashley believed that the allocation of subjects and subject choices was based on qualifications. Ashley*: "It's all about qualifications, especially the teaching of subjects".*

This allows for specialised teaching with personnel members being given the opportunity to excel their predetermined areas of choice and specialisation. Both personnel and learners would benefit from this process. Ashley explained that, for the process to be fair, "*they try to ensure that we are all equal".* Ashley believed that the process in terms of which subjects are assigned and allocated to male and female teachers in the school was based on two principles, namely, qualifications and equality.

It also seemed that the work ethic of males and females were diametrically opposed in the school environment.

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In contrast to Ashley, Jacob acknowledged that subjects, especially life orientation and sport, were assigned according gender perceptions with males usually being assigned sport subjects due to their neglect of and lack of interest in marking and administrative tasks.

Mark explained that the administrative nature of certain subjects sometimes demotivated male teachers and led to their leaving the education profession. Thus, the question arises as to the way in which subjects are then assigned to males and females.

The data from the study reflected that the majority of the participants were uncertain as to how management allocated subjects and academic workload in practice although they were aware that management held annual meetings in which workload and subjects were allocated to teachers in accordance with the prescribed outlines given by the Department of Education (Republic of South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2014).

Betty, a female management member, explained that academic workload is divided "equally" between management members and lower ranking teachers. She did, however, state that not everyone shared her beliefs. Betty explained, "*You know, I am sure there are people that will differ from me".* Thus, Betty acknowledged that some of the participants were unsatisfied with the process whereby academic workload was distributed. However, although Betty had been informed about the staff members which were not satisfied with the process, no attempt had been made to address their grievances and, instead, they were left with their uncertainty about how and by which method subjects were assigned.

Ironically, Magriet believed that academic workload, as well as extramural activities, are assigned to the position to which one is appointed. Magriet claimed that: "*Well, it was assigned to me when I was appointed. When I was appointed they were looking for somebody who could teach music, and take over the choir, concert and nobody else, they were looking for those expertise."*

Thus, Magriet provided evidence of how the school manipulate and navigate the process of workload division through specific appointments. Ron confirmed the process as described by Magriet. Ron, who was also a school manager, confirmed that "*academic workload and extramurals are assigned to positions".* Therefore, a person with the appropriate qualifications and abilities will be appointed. This includes a "*gender specific appointment to fit the needs and responsibilities of the previous teacher".*

In other words, the division of labour and allocation of academic responsibilities are centred on the preferred gender appointment of males and females, who then assume the workload and responsibilities of the previous incumbent.

Thus, the capabilities required when applying for positions are directly linked to qualifications in the academic field and in extramural activities. Moreover, specific positions in the school environment are directly associated with a specific gender.

Mark explained that academic positions in education are based on "*merit, qualifications, experience as well as the success rates of the teacher*". Mark acknowledged that the following were included when positions and vacancies were advertised: 1) the subject in which the person should be qualified; 2) years of teaching experience; and 3) gender as indicated in the job description. Gender was implied in both the academic and the extramural responsibilities of the position advertised. In other words, either of the genders could be eliminated and discriminated against through the appointment and/or interview process in relation to both extramural responsibilities and academic responsibilities being manipulated in school to ensure the selection and appointment of one gender above the other.

Thus, the study found that the school used the job descriptions of the extramural and academic workload to manipulate the appointment of staff. It is ironic to note that schools are allowed to specifically describe the positions that should be filled despite the fact that this should be in agreement with the gender equality policy.

Jacob's interview also revealed how gender is associated with specific academic fields in schools. He acknowledged that sports subjects and life orientation were typically assigned to males – *"there are more men in sport positions"*.

When questioned, Jacob explained that the male stereotypes in terms of physical abilities often outweighs qualifications and academic workload guidelines. Jacob further explained that "*Men are physical, they're a bigger presence, and woman are more reserved"*. Thus, compared to females, males are assigned fewer academic roles and more physical and sport-related activities. In other words, the perception of the male as more physical and sports orientated not only establishes a cultural tendency but also a social perception.

Jacob explained that sport managers will "*always be male … they tended to prefer males in the sport management positions of a school … So there might be judgement, like first impressions that people might get, because of the workplace.*

Whereas they see a male teacher walking through your school, they automatically assume, 'Okay, he must be involved with sport'".

As emerged from Jacob's interview, gender perceptions directly dictate the assumed positions and roles held by males and females at the school.

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Joy, who is an experienced teacher, believed that the various schools at which she had taught had one thing in common, namely, the sports positions, whether life orientation or sport manager, were always held by males teachers.

When questioned, Joy explained that this was a tradition which had manifested in school and had been affirmed by both the appointment process and social beliefs about the male role in the educational sector. Joy believed it was the "*stereotypical ideals of Phys. Ed teachers*" that facilitated the continued appointment of males to sport positions in schools.

The issue of gender is also evident in the ascribed roles of the genders during the appointment process as well as the allocation of specific subjects. Jacob also made clear distinctions between the positions held by each gender in the school:

> "*But then heads of departments or the admin ladies in the schools… admin ladies like I just said, so it's you know, the secretaries and stuff are always the female teachers, and the sports are always the sports coaches and heads of sports are always the males. So I feel like there is that big split*".

As described by Jacob, there is a clear distinction between the genders in the organisational culture of the school which is not in line with equity or equality policy but which, instead, favours the prevailing perceptions of genders in social and cultural organisations.

Jacob further explained how gender divisions are actualised at the school as well as how gender perceptions are navigated:

> "*… because I was very sporty I studied a sports degree, I was more suited for sports, whereas maybe some of the admin ladies, for example our finance lady, she studied finance.*"

> "*So I think you're more suited for your role, so you study more specifically for a certain role. but in some cases you know maybe a female teacher or a female comes in here and they automatically assume okay let's put her with the finance side, but she might be very sporty.*

> "*So, there might be judgements like first impressions that people might get, because of the workplace, whereas they see a male teacher walking through your school, they automatically assume okay he must be involved with the sport. So like I said partly there is gender differences, but I think it's also more how, like I said earlier, the way you studied, your kind of field that you've gone towards*".

It is thus clear that stereotypical ideals of genders still govern and determine the academic positions of males and females at the school as well as the extramural activities assigned to educators.

It was, however, interesting to note that the male participants tended to express stereotypical ideals of men at the school while most of the female participants believed that academic workload was based on opportunities and qualifications and that gender had, in no way, played a role in their appointments or their academic workload.

On the other hand, a broader variety of gender perspectives were expressed in relation to the extramural activities, namely, coaching and the sporting and cultural activities at the school. The different gendered perspectives of the male and female participants were more pronounced in relation to the extramural activities as compared to the academic field. There were clear divisions between the male and female participants in terms of these activities being either male or female orientated.

14.2 Extramural activities

This section addresses the stereotypical roles of males and females in the activities at the school. As reflected in the data these activities were based on the idealistic roles of females and males while the extramural activities were also based on the gender of the learners with gender crossovers in sporting and cultural activities were sometimes described as "*unnatural*". The data highlighted that sport was more gendered than academic subjects in relation to the way in which was divided and who is responsible for it.

It was deemed necessary to analyse the process and practices used by management to assign the relevant roles and responsibilities in order to determine how male and female teachers were allocated extramural responsibilities. The management members believed that the process of delegation and the allocation of workload and responsibilities were based on "*voluntary participation*". The data reflected that the male and female teachers were supposed to volunteer by making themselves available for extramural activities, for example writing their names next to a sport or cultural activity at the beginning of a school trimester. Management then reviewed the activities and organise the teachers' participation accordingly.

A minority of the participants believed this process was fair and allowed for personal time management.

However, Sarah believed she had been discriminated against by the process as the extramurals for which she had volunteered had been cancelled and she had been forced to participate in and take responsibility for other activities. Sarah expressed her dissatisfaction with the processes which had been used to allocate her extramural activities.

She believed that the process had benefited other teachers. She also felt that the process did not take into account the academic workload of each subject.

She was of the opinion that her academic workload was heavier than that of her colleagues as she taught languages and therefore she had less time and time to devote to extramural activities.

In contrast to Sarah, Rita explained that the extramural activities were allocated based on the preferences of the individual teacher. She also explained that gender influenced the allocation and division of extramural activities as "*stereotypes govern*" the responsibilities allocated to the individual teachers, citing *"the stereotypes, that sports is for women and this sport is for men".* The stereotypes that governed the extramural activities to which the individual teachers were assigned were described as being traditional, "*as it is something we grew up seeing".* It was, thus, clear that that the allocation of extramural activities was not based on qualifications and/or experience, as claimed by the majority of the participants, but was, in fact, and based on the traditional and cultural roles of males and females.

It is ironic that management appeared to believe that there was no division between male and female sports responsibilities, management members claimed that the allocation of the extramural activities were unbiased: "*Uh, no. Because there is now women folk that do rugby and soccer and cricket and everything, I don't think so anymore.*"

It was, however, interesting to note that the school was not yet offering these sports and instead was offering soccer, athletics and netball. Accordingly, I presumed that the principal was referring to women teachers taking these sports. Thus I was not able to determine whether gender did play a role in the allocation of responsibilities and also extramural and sporting activities at the school. The principal appeared not to be aware of most of the organisational activities taking place under her designated authority. I regarded this as the reason why the sports manager preferred to work with the male management member.

The sports organiser had described his relationship with this specific management member as labored due to her lack of organisational abilities and also her aversion to help in the allocation and delegation of responsibilities to personnel members. This, in turn, had resulted in the sport manager having to manage and coach all the sporting activities at the school.

It was, thus, clear that this management member was not only lapsing to act as a management member with authority and encourage staff participation in extramural activities, but also failing in relation to the delegation and decision-making that were included in job description.

When addressing the issue of who coached what teams the role of gender became even more apparent.

The data revealed that women were supposed to coach the female learners and men the male learners because of the possibility that "*people start asking questions*" if this did not happen.

Jacob explained the division between gender and sporting activities as follows:

> "*You would actually think naturally, let's just give it to that person instead of just actually hearing about their interest … Coaches are very gender specific to sports … This sport is for women, this sport is for men … it's something that we grew up seeing that okay, females coach, females they coach netball, and then males go to soccer … Males will teach males and females will teach females, because maybe there that better connection or relationship.*"

The method used to allocate positions and activities at the school seemed to be a natural gender ascription process in terms of which gendered directly dictated responsibilities. Thus, a paradox arose between the labour division among the teachers, social and cultural expectations and equality and equity. In other words, not only were the teachers' workloads in regard to sport dependent on qualifications and the ability to coach the sport activities in question but social dictates prevented males and females from coaching any sport that may not have been either a female or male orientated sport.

I had not anticipated that the social and cultural beliefs in terms of the sporting activities which were regarded as either male or female oriented would exercise such a significant influence on the teachers' workloads. Neither had I anticipated that the prevailing perceptions would be generally dependent upon male identities. However, female teachers coaching teams with male learners is acceptable as females are supposed to work with both males and females at the school level whereas males are ostracised and neglected when it comes to their coaching female sports. One wonders what issues arise from the mixed gender sports.

This brings to me to the next argument in relation to males and society. It would appear that male authority and male leadership are natural and even traditional phenomena and are accepted and practised in social and cultural environments.

However, when comparing the social and traditional positions of men in relation to sport, it would seem that their gender, authority and positions are dependent on the gender of the learners despite the fact that this contradicts their seemingly natural social positioning.

Thus, sporting activities are assigned to the genders in accordance with the genders of the learners with traditionally female sports being assigned to the female teachers and the traditionally male sports to the male teachers. Any crossover between the genders is considered to be both irregular and peculiar. Peter explained that sport was "*orientated towards gender*".

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Thus, in the school environment, gender serves as the baseline for the allocation and division of sporting activities. Peter divided the sports offered as follows: "*Netball is female, males are athletics, soccer and cricket coaches*".

The cross-country running was divided into two groups on the basis of gender with the male learners being coached and transported by the male coach and likewise for the female cross-country running.

Mark explained this tendency in a particularly gender-specific manner: "*and our society is also that 'girls stick to girls' sport and guys stick to guys' sport' but there is no discrimination*". Ironically, Mark believed that this was fair and non-discriminatory with males and females being supposed to coach and become a part of the various sporting activities according to the gender. The fact that Mark believed that this was not a form of gender discrimination is worth noting. Gender discrimination is based on the unfair division of individuals based on their genders and not on either their personal choices or equity needs.

It may be that gender discrimination in respect of the division of sports activities according to gender is due to the seemingly natural method used to assign these activities to males and females. It is, clear that in this process the school and staff have become gender blind to the discriminating factors present in the educational environment, with the natural and traditional habits and processes being continuously reproduced and replicated by the staff members themselves who believe this is equal and fair.

Similarly, Mark demonstrated the symbolic numerical ideals created and maintained by school management and society when addressing the issue of gender in education. Mark's statement as seen above, embodied the current tendency to proclaim gender equality and equity through the manipulation of gender perceptions and relationships in the school environment with gender perceptions and relationships being manipulated and navigated through management activities, including the allocation of the teachers' workload. Thus, the continued reproduction and replication of these gender processes and gendered relationships lead to the development of behavioural tendencies which support unequal gender perceptions, therefore a gender-blind system.

Furthermore, Mark's notion that these gendered practices were part of society entrenched the argument that social and cultural tendencies had been introduced into the practices, processes and functions within the school.

The social and cultural beliefs in respect of gender were remaining unchanged and unchallenged and, thus, the inequality at the school was also remaining unchanged.

It is interesting to note that the same argument was presented when the educational phases and the appointment of males and females at the various education levels were addressed. It was clear that the perceptions of males and females at the school are still determined by the gender of the learners as well as what is culturally and socially acceptable.

The process used to allocate responsibilities and extramural activities was described as "*voluntary*". Ironically, the process is anything but voluntary as responsibilities and extramural activities are assigned according to gender, position and management decisions.

Peter also explained that, although the division of labour was voluntary, the segregation between staff members created frustration. He stated that some staff members' "*workloads are lighter and others are overloaded*" due to the unequal division of labour between staff members and the "voluntary: basis on which the workload was assigned.

It was clear that Thembi had experienced the unequal division of work between genders as well as being overloaded herself.

> *"Because I found myself sometimes ah just literally doing everything every single day and I found I couldn't like my life was just organised in a certain pattern and also having all the grades, teaching all the grades and you know I want to support all the children as well and I also want to do my extra murals you know and I want to do them well so it wasn't easy."*

It was clear that Thembi was not averse to contribute to the school in question and nor was she hesitant to volunteer for extramural activities, but she was overloaded by her academic and existing extramural activities. Thembi explained that she wanted to apply herself to the best of her ability but found that management's decision made to allocate her more responsibility was resulting in her becoming exhausted and unable to apply herself in all areas. Thembi went on to explain why she believed this had happened at the school.

> *"I think there's still that thing of the man is the one who can do certain things and the women is the one who can do certain things as well, you know maybe even if it's just subtle."*

It was obvious that Thembi believed that at the school, gender roles and perceptions still played a key role in the division of activities, workload and responsibilities. Whether the individual teacher was overloaded with academic and extramural responsibilities was irrelevant. Management still allocated these functions in accordance with what they perceived genders to be capable of instead of what the individual teacher's needs or capabilities are.

Martha, who was a management member, agreed that the process used to allocate academic workload and extramural activities was not, in fact, fair and nor did it take into account the individual teachers' workload and capabilities. Martha explained:

"… because sometimes the same teachers always end up doing the long sporting hours.

Some of them like to do it but some, maybe, end up doing it, and then it's a little unfair, because some … other teachers don't. They just do sort of an hour a week whereas the cricket teachers do sort of six hours a week."

Clearly the voluntary basis on which extramural activities as well as the academic workload were allocated was not resulting in an equal division of labour between the teachers and other staff members. Instead, the discrepancies between the genders and staff members were being exacerbated by the process and resulting in the unfair or rather unequal status of various staff members.

Peter further explained that, in terms of this process of volunteering and allocating the sport activities, gender was seen as a stereotypical process and practice, with activities being allocated according to gender *"stereotypes".* Peter explained that these stereotypes were based on the perceptions of "*other people*".

I asked who these people were but failed to understand the disassociation which Peter made between himself and other staff members. The division of extramurals was based on three distinct issues, namely, qualification to coach the team, the genders of the staff member and the learners as well as the perceptions of society.

Mark explained the first issue as follows: "*qualifications directly determine what teams are coached and at what level the staff member will be assigned".* Staff members would coach a team until they reached a point at which they were no longer able or qualified to coach the specific team. Mark explained how this process was actualised at the school.

Management assigns teams and coaches according to qualifications and offers initiatives to encourage personal members to continue "*qualifying themselves to enable progression in sports associated environments".* Mark appeared to believe that personal growth and development were valued more highly in sporting and school environments than in other economic sectors.

Mark continually emphasised the personal progression and development of teachers as playing a key role in both promotion, as well as sports progression in terms of the levels at which the individual coached.

It was, therefore, clear that the male perception of development was vested in the ability to make career progress while the women tended to believe that the career progress of females was not determined by their qualifications but rather by their gender. They appeared to believe that they are bogged down in certain educational phases and sports activities due to the fact that they were female.

Although extramurals were allocated on a voluntary basis, the school still encouraged everyone to become involved – "*our school encourages everyone, all teachers, to be involved in extramurals, so it doesn't matter whether you're sporty or not, it's just helping out managing*".

The data clearly revealed that the participants believed that this process was fair and natural at this school, in spite of the fact that some of them had acknowledged that gender determined the activities for which they were responsible and also why some teachers were assigned more responsibilities than others. They also admitted that qualifications, personal preferences and standard division of labour methods did not always play a role in the allocation of extramural responsibilities, thus resulting in some staff members feeling dissatisfied.

As Debbi explained, the after-school care facility was specifically assigned to women "*because you've got to feed them, and you've got to cuddle them, and you've got to be feminine, you know, and motherly about it*". Thus, Debbi still believed that the process in terms of which the genders were assigned stereotypical roles was still somehow fair and equal. I struggled to fathom the reasoning behind such beliefs as the genders in education are supposedly equal and should not be allocated extramural activities on the basis of stereotypical gender perceptions.

I also questioned how both male and female teachers were ceasing to question or challenge the process in the school in question. I concluded that the stereotypes and gender ascribed roles were part of the ethos of the school and also that the fact that staff members had become accustomed to the school culture and traditions. Therefore, they did not question, challenge or protest against the traditions and practices. Instead, they continued to uphold the traditions and practices of ascribing gender roles and perceptions according to academic and sport-related activities.

In fact, one participant appeared to be unaware of the division between the genders as well as the extramural activities. Gift claimed that, according to her knowledge, males and females were not assigned different responsibilities.

I found this to be profoundly interesting as either Gift was either unaware of the school's practices and traditions or she did not interact with other staff members and therefore could not distinguish between the responsibilities of the male and female teachers.

Similarly, Lucy believed that the process and practices in terms of which extramural activities were assigned "*just happens*", thus indicating that she was completely unaware of the notion of volunteering or the influence of management on the allocation of responsibilities and activities. I concluded that the process used to allocate these activities had become so natural that, as argued by Lucy, it actually did just happens at the school.

Similarly, Rita described this process as "*it's been that way*", thereby implying that it had been established as the culture and tradition. In addition, the process itself had become a tradition which was reproduced and replicated continuously by both the staff members and management. In fact, the role of gender in the process had become such a tradition that it was no longer even witnesses and/or argued about but, instead, it accepted as the standard and norm within the school with staff members acting, behaving and responding in accordance with the expected standards and the gendered perceptions, expectations and traditions. This, in turn, meant that they maintained and supported the gendered roles, responsibilities and unequal practices and traditions in the school.

Lucy also supported the latter argument when she stated that "*it is expected*" and remarked that personnel members willingly distributed themselves accordingly. Lucy claimed that males and females would naturally assign themselves to specific sports based on their own gender. She also confirmed that learners tended to respond better to males on the sports field due to "male authority". Thus, Lucy clearly supported my belief that gender had become embedded in the process of allocating responsibilities and workloads, thus, ensuring that the process became a tradition. She also emphasised that the perceptions of males far exceeded the classroom and management positions and had also been transferred to sports activities through the process and practices used to assign responsibilities and extramural activities.

Similarly, Thembi argued that "*gender roles will always be assumed in the way they've always been and they won't change.* Thembi clearly believed that gender would always remain a crucial part of the process and practices which would not be changed or challenged but, rather, they would be maintained in spite of the fact that social and cultural dispositions develop and change continuously.

14.3 Conclusion

The study found that gendered beliefs in the school environment dictate and navigate practices and processes in terms of which extramurals activities and academic subjects are assigned based on gender.

Although it is claimed that management navigates these activities on a perceived voluntary basis, as argued by Lucy, the process is in fact embedded in the social and cultural dispositions of society. In addition, the process itself is not voluntary and is subject to the decisions and preferences of management members. It was ironical that the participants believed that the method used was both fair and equal but also saw it as central to unequal gendered perceptions.

It appeared that the allocation of academic subjects was based on qualifications, merit and experience with teachers being allocated subjects that were in keeping with their abilities and areas of expertise. However, there was a clear distinction between "male" and "female" subjects. Males were associated with being sporty and, thus, they were appointed to sport orientated subjects and positions while females were appointed to the academic subjects. Some of the participants believed that the workload per subject was not taken into account during the process of allocating workload and that this led to some individuals being overloaded and abused while the work responsibilities of others were negligible.

The process by which the participants had been appointed supported a gendered process in which positions were allocated to either males or females by clearly outlining the extramural responsibilities of each, for example a netball coach and a drama teacher. It was, therefore, clear that gender played a role in the appointment process and that the issue of gender was manipulated during the process.

It emerged from the study that gender inequality has become a tradition in the school context and school practices. In addition, it is continuously reinforced, practised and reproduced by both teachers and management. Accordingly, any claims of gender equality are fictitious as teachers and management are failing to realise, challenge and question the prevailing practices in a gender-blind environment.

I concluded that gender played a role in the workload of teachers through the practices and processes used to assign their responsibilities. In addition, the teachers themselves were enacting gender discrimination and gender stereotypes by selecting gendered activities and expecting others in their working environment to behave and act accordingly.

Chapter 7

15. Findings and conclusion

My study focused on the exploration of gender and power relationships between members of management and junior teachers. I explored their genders were implicated in the processes of decision-making, division of labour and professional development. I investigated these at one secondary school in South Africa with the intention of exploring the current interchangeable nature of gender equality, equity and parity. I also explored the way the interchangeable nature of equity, equality and parity has led to the continuous reproduction of gender inequality, thus creating unequal statuses and relationships between the male and female gender.

As argued in the literature review, the current tendency to use equity, equality and parity interchangeably has resulted in the enactment and implementation of different processes, and practices, which in turn achieves outcomes that differ from those anticipated by gender equality and equity initiatives. It should be acknowledged that equity, equality and parity do not in state or achieve the same purposes and outcomes at the school, and therefore have resulted in unequal power and gender relationships, leading to unevenly mobilised resources and positions between the male and female gender.

The focus on equality has shifted from equal rights, opportunities and processes to numerically calculated and manipulated values which results in this genders occupying specific positions. I explored this phenomenon at the school by applying a qualitative case study design. I interpreted the results and findings within the constructivist and interpretivist paradigms, sampling 20 participants of different employment levels by using both snowball and purposive sampling methods. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to probe and explore the responses and arguments given by the participants during the interview process.

I analysed this phenomenon within three distinct sub-themes, namely, decision-making, professional development and the division of labour between males and females of different employment levels. I found that within each sub-theme a tendency existed to support and uphold gender-ascribed roles and ascription processes. The majority of male and female participants themselves supported and reproduced the idealistic stereotypes of males and females in positions, as well as with regard to promotions, workloads and responsibilities.

Ironically, the processes and practices used during decision-making, the division of labour and professional development have remained unchallenged and unchanged due to the maintenance of gender parity initiatives.

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Thus, a gender-blind school environment has been created as both teachers and management uphold unequal gender relationships, and the focus of inequality has remained on the numerical representation of males and females instead of equality and equity initiatives.

Currently, the social and cultural positioning of males and females has supported the unequal promotional processes. Males are progressed to higher authority positions at a faster rate than their female counterparts. The social and cultural understanding of male superiority has transcended to the school for the purpose of supporting gendered practices, thus maintaining social and cultural hierarchies and patriarchal principles at the school. Consequently, a second interesting phenomenon has emerged. Male and female participants naturally demonstrated these social and cultural practices and ideals. The majority of participants positioned themselves according to the social understanding of male authority and female nurturing roles. However, a minority of the participants criticised the nature of this process as it has become habituated at the school thus becoming a social and cultural tradition. Therefore, gender inequality is reproduced and maintained by the population themselves during activities of decision-making, division of labour and professional development.

In light of the preceding argument, both genders orchestrate unequal relationships based on the influential factor of gender perceptions in the community and society. Therefore, a paradox is created at the school as teachers and management proclaim equality but practice inequality.

Practices at the school should be aligned with the Gender Equity, Equality and Empowerment policy which specifically aims at increasing female representation in management and leadership positions. This should be achieved through accelerated appointment processes. Although as witnessed, the majority of females at the school currently tend to support their gendered roles and positions in accordance with the perceptions fostered by society and the assumed natural authority and leadership males demonstrate.

In contrast to the social and cultural positioning of males and females is the bottleneck effect that limits progress and promotions due to the following factors: age, position, gender, qualifications and years of experience. Thus, the numerical value of women in progressed positions theoretically encourages the idea of equality, but in practice becomes challenged by social perceptions of genders as well as limited positions available for promotions.

Similarly, the numerated values of genders foster the supposition of equality in accordance with policy, but neglects the intricate relationships between genders. The intricate nature of the relationships is built on the perceptions of both genders at the school. In this particular study, the majority of female participants welcomed numerical representation as a form of equality and equity, affirming a gender-blind context.

These female participants upheld the ideal that males are discriminated against by gender equality processes at the school due to the lack of males. Ironically, female participants were perplexed by this phenomenon, as two distinct issues arose; the first being that women felt that males are disadvantaged by the fact that they are in the minority, and secondly, females believed that this encouraged both fair and unfair practices.

This phenomenon is central to the shift in educational focus, as equality and equity are substituted for gender parity. Both males and females support gender inequality by numerically accounting for the representation of genders.

Although equal representation of males and females in management positions has been achieved, it does not translate to equally shared authority, responsibilities, opportunities or gender equal relationships. Nor does it imply that male and female managers have equal power at the secondary school level. Instead, gender has become a tradition of understanding males and females as being unequal. Furthermore, processes of decision-making and school governance further establish these traditions and practices as patriarchal gender perceptions, and socially cultivated expectations remain unchallenged through processes of decision-making, coordination and control.

Therefore, the relationships between the genders are coordinated to the extent that women and men no longer challenge patriarchal perceptions of genders but rather conform to the expected norms. The misconception of safety is created within the known accepted traditions. Thus women become followers in the sense that they become immersed in gender unequal statuses for the purpose of job security and safety rather than challenging patriarchal systems

Gender is therefore intertwined in decision-making and school governance; it is embedded in management activities that allow for the manipulation of gender perceptions within power relationships and hierarchical authority structures. Gender thus becomes a form of power as it is used to manipulate the social context of the school. As described by participants, male authority is central to social and cultural expectations and perceptions. In contrast, the authority and power of female management has been questioned, challenged and rejected by both junior teachers and male management alike. Thus the progressed positions and equal numbers fail to take account of the nature of gender within the process of decision-making. Decision-making becomes an organised relationship of interpreting gender and power within a position. Thus, female management had shown a tendency, to overcompensate by taking control over all aspects of the work environment.

The gendered perceptions of male and female management regarding authority and power affirms the stereotypical gender association of male and female, in spite of the fact that the genders are presented as being numerically equal.

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Ironically, the data in my study reflect that the majority of participants believed equal numerical values equated to equality, and therefore believed that management authority and power was equally shared. The practicality thereof was questioned during the interview process as participants only then understood that the relationships between genders amounted to unequal statuses.

The unequal status between the genders was further actualised through the process of dividing responsibilities and academic workloads. Accordingly, the data reflected that two distinct issues were embedded in the processes in which responsibilities and workloads were assigned, the first being the process in which workloads were assigned by management and the second was the influence gender had on the process. Participants described the process as being autocratic and traditional, as it was specifically aimed at gendered roles and gender ascribed positions which have been replicated continuously for the past four years at the school. Teachers are delegated responsibilities according to their gender, for example males coached male sports whiles females were responsible for female sports such as netball.

While the participants described the process as being autocratic and gender specific, staff collaborated in this process as they, interestingly enough, assigned and delegated themselves voluntarily according to their gender. Participants also reinforced these ideals of gendered responsibilities as they described subjects, activities and responsibilities in accordance with specific gender perceptions. The data also reflected that if there were to be a crossover between the genders of teachers and those of learners participating in the sport or cultural activity, concerns and questions would be raised especially in regard to males coaching females. However, this tendency was not seen when females coached males.

Thus, the division of responsibilities and workloads was directly aligned with social and cultural gender expectations, as well as establishing and reaffirming gender perceptions and stereotypes. Ironically, the process was described as being voluntary by the majority of participants, hence it would seem that some of gender manipulation existed. As management applied their personal and professional authority and power to allocate responsibilities and workloads through the process of decision-making, a culture and tradition was established at the school in which staff members naturally responded to as a collective, supporting and maintaining engendered activities. Thus, the phenomenon of staff allocating themselves to certain duties in accordance with their gender can be described as a habituated tradition driven by power and authority.

Thus, the relationships between power, gender and authority become evident in the process used to coordinate responsibilities and workloads.

Through this process of assigning workloads and responsibilities, cohesion and coordination at the school is achieved between genders.

Similarly, the goals and aims of equity and equality have been eliminated in the process of assigning workloads and responsibilities through the decision-making process, as gender is the determining factor. Thus, gender inequality has become both a tradition and a school practice, which is continuously reinforced. Practices are reproduced by both teachers and management in the process of decision-making, in the division of labour and in professional development. Thereby gender equality is proclaimed as they fail to realise, challenge and question current practices in a gender-blind environment. Therefore, teachers themselves enact gender discrimination and gender stereotypes through the process of selecting gendered activities and expecting others in the working environment to behave and act accordingly.

I accordingly conclude that gender is no longer a mere phenomenon at the school but has become an unspoken understanding of how males and female interact and act within the school environment. Gender has therefore become intertwined with the authority, decision-making and management processes to such an extent that it becomes a habitual tradition which is supported and maintained by the teachers of both genders themselves. Gender inequality thus remains a recurring tradition at the school, as staff and management members reproduce gendered perceptions and processes in the belief that they are equal and equitable.

Gender and power have formed a relationship in which power is used to govern the sexes as a collective. The collective ideal of males and females as a whole enforces and secures traditions and school culture as method and process within the environment. Thus, the equity needs of the individual teacher are sacrificed for those of the collective. Accordingly, policy becomes a mechanism of control and authority, which governs, coordinates and manipulates the circumstances in which gender and power are implicated and manipulated. Policy becomes an institutional mechanism which sustains inequality by applying gender parity principles in the hopes of achieving gender equality.

Ironically, both staff and members of management claimed to have no knowledge of the gender policy nor how it should be implemented in a secondary school. Thus, a paradoxical environment is created. Teachers and management claim that they are equal and enjoy equal authority and opportunities and that their equity needs are met, but in fact the school is unaware of the purpose, aims and outcomes of equality.

The only standard idea manifested at the school was that of numerical representation. Gender becomes a social mechanism which is used during certain processes, and in the practices of decision making, the division of labour and professional development, in which gender inequality becomes a justification for unequal relationships and engendered practices.

Therefore, gender inequality has become a negotiated relationship between power and authority at a secondary school, including the influential role of social and cultural tendencies, which manifest in the perceptions of genders. I conclude that gender inequality has been substituted for numerical representation of gender which is located in the processes of coordination, delegation, decision-making and workload division. Management thus maintains the perception of equality by campaigning for numerical representation but simultaneously neglects equality and equity aims. Thus, the complex phenomenon of the relationship between power and gender is eliminated and inequality becomes an unceasing habit and tradition which is reinforced by both teachers and management.